



NEWSLETTER

Volume 69 / February 2026



Message From the Chief

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



Greetings,

This winter has once again, unfortunately, brought detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Commercial and backyard poultry operations in Northern California have been infected with the wild bird strain of HPAI. The Animal Health Branch (AHB) continues to respond rapidly to these detections, mitigating further impacts. We are grateful for the continued vigilance and collaboration with our industry, federal, and academic partners that have led to the early detection and rapid response to these detections. Read below for further updates on HPAI in both our poultry and dairy industries.

There have been some staffing changes in the Animal Health Branch and the Animal Health and Food Safety Services (AHFSS) Division. Dr. Annette Jones, the AHFSS Division Director and State Veterinarian for 20 years, retired at the end of 2025. Dr. Stephen Beam was appointed AHFSS Division Director, and I was appointed as the acting State Veterinarian. The AHB has also successfully hired eleven new staff since the beginning of October 2025, filling

Continued on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE:

Message From the Chief	1	Changes to USDA Payment of Indemnity and Compensation for HPAI	7
AHB Staffing Update	2	Q Fever: It's Complicated	8
Message From Dr. Jones	2	Foreign Animal Disease Investigations.....	9
HPAI in Bovine in California Update	2	What Would Dr. Theodore Woodward Say?.....	10
H5N1 HPAI Update in California.....	3	2026 CDFA Reportable Disease List.....	11
Some Cases of Avian Influenza in California Backyard Flocks	4	Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program: Bringing Livestock Veterinarians to Areas in Need	11
New World Screwworm: California Surveillance and Preparedness Update.....	5	AUS Releases 2025 Annual Report	12
Texas Only Accepting eCIVs Inspection for Interstate Movement of Animals Effective January 1, 2026.....	6	2026 CDFA Reportable Disease List Chart	13
EIA Prevalence in Unsanctioned Horse Racing	6	Animal Health Branch Staff Biographies	14
		Contact Information	16

some long-time vacancies as well as new positions created to improve our response capabilities. We are excited to build out our programs and provide further support to our industries.

As we head into 2026, the AHB continues to focus on disease response and preparedness. Diseases such as HPAI, New World Screwworm, Equine Infectious Anemia, and Equine Herpes Myeloencephalitis are at the top of our priority list; however, we also know that anything can appear at any time. Together, through strong collaboration with our industry, academic, and federal partners, we can continue to address what comes. Thank you to everyone for doing your part to protect California Animal Agriculture.

AHB Staffing Update

We would like to welcome new staff members to the AHB! The AHB has been actively hiring staff over the past several months, including into the following programs:

- Veterinarian in Charge (supervisor) for the Modesto District
- Assistant Veterinarian in Charge for the Ontario District
- Veterinarians in both the Tulare and Modesto districts
- Non-veterinary field staff in both Tulare and Modesto districts
- Biosecurity Compliance Audit Program with staff in Headquarters and the field
- Permanent permitting unit for emergency permitting

Watch for staff introductions in the biography section of the newsletter over the coming issues.

Message From Dr. Jones – Dr. Jones Reflects on Her Career at CDFA

“I have run a good race.”

I can honestly say that my belief in California agriculture and serving the public has consistently come first for me. I reliably stepped up to the plate when called upon. I never quit even after making mistakes. I learned. But I was also surrounded by opportunity, good mentors and talent in my entire career. I was given the chance to run a very good race.

Looking forward, my hope is that the spirit of cooperation continues as California farmers and ranchers face new threats and that we keep focusing on getting the job done with mutual respect. I am confident in the excellent staff that will carry on the CDFA Animal Health and Food Safety programs. An early mentor told me that you can survive as state veterinarian through openness to change and by being true, listening to others, making science-based decisions and being respectful—words I have tried to remember in this 20-year race.

Read the full article on [Ag Alert](#).



Dr. Annette Jones

HPAI in Bovine in California Update

By: Natalie Ward, DVM, Veterinarian in Charge, Tulare District

As we start the 2026 year, the current state of bovine H5N1 has evolved for California’s major milksheds since the outbreak began in September of 2024. Initially, we saw a rapid and serious spread of bovine H5N1 through our most densely populated dairy areas. Then, in summer to fall of 2025, there was a brief recurrence of the virus in just under 10% of previously affected herds. The spread was much slower fortunately, with herds also appearing to recover more quickly. Clinical signs in these herds tended to be of short duration, often observed in first lactation animals and usually not requiring treatment. Most commonly, dairy owners reported seeing a rapid unexplained increase in Somatic Cell Count (SCC), followed by a reduction in milk production,

cows going off feed and general signs of illness. The course of infection tended to last a few weeks for most, though there are still some cattle that, once affected, are not returning to milk production and culled. More recently, we are still seeing sporadic positive herds. Fortunately, these herds tend to resolve back to negative tests fairly quickly after an initial viral detection. We continue to ask dairy owners to report sudden unusual increases in sick cows, sharp decreases in milk production, increasing levels of abortion or other significant events that may indicate a return of H5N1 to their farm.

CDFA continues to monitor all dairy herds in California via milk samples

Continued on page 3

and provide results to the dairy owners via email or as requested. Follow up calls are made to dairies with positive test results to ask about any recent cattle movements or noticeable clinical signs. Many herds with positive tests have seen no clinical signs or changes in milk production – but sporadic positive tests tell us that H5N1 is still very much present in California dairies, even if at much lower levels.

Biosecurity, appropriate isolation of new animals, and worker protection remain essential for reducing the risk of another wave of re-infections throughout the coming year. Key components of these recommendations include Personal Protective Equipment for workers, reducing unnecessary people and vehicle access on farm, and monitoring newly arrived animals for signs of clinical disease. If you have any questions about H5N1, please reach out to CDFA.



H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Update in California

By: Laura Bradley, DVM, Veterinarian General, CAHEN

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), caused by the H5N1 virus, continues to circulate in California and across the United States as part of a multi-year national outbreak that began in 2022. During the winter of 2025–2026, California had a high level of surveillance and response, especially as seasonal migratory bird movements increased the risk of virus introduction and spread among domestic poultry.

As of January 2026, California has confirmed HPAI impacts across commercial poultry, backyard [flocks](#), and [dairy](#) operations since the start of the outbreak. Extensive surveillance, testing, and biosecurity efforts have allowed the state to rapidly detect infections, release quarantines when appropriate, and support continuity of business while prioritizing animal health and disease prevention.

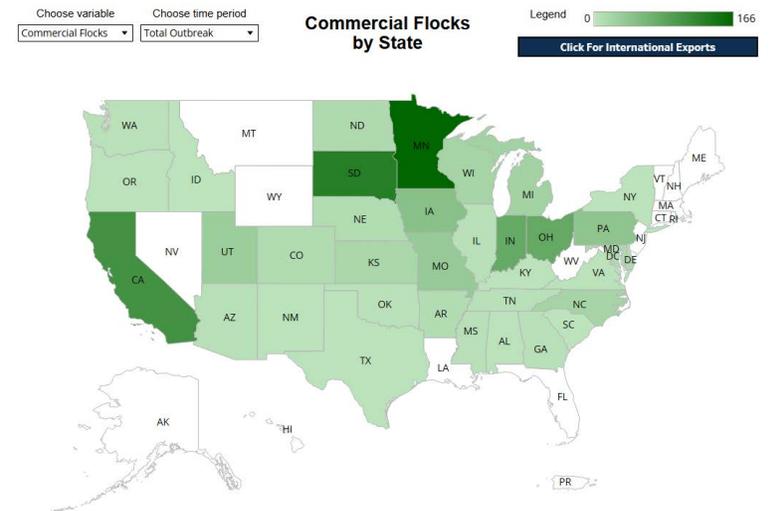
Winter Response and Surveillance

Throughout the fall and winter months, CDFA continued intensive surveillance activities statewide, including testing associated with routine monitoring, interstate movement, and

foreign animal disease investigations. All California dairies remain enrolled in ongoing HPAI surveillance testing, and poultry surveillance continues across commercial and backyard premises. These efforts support early detection and rapid response while improving our understanding of how the virus behaves across species and production systems.

Lifting of the Poultry and Dairy Cattle Exhibition Ban

Based on declining detections, surveillance data, and improved understanding of risk mitigation strategies, CDFA recently lifted the ban on livestock and poultry exhibitions at fairs and other events. This decision reflects careful risk assessment and continued monitoring of poultry and dairy cattle through surveillance statewide. Event organizers, exhibitors, and animal owners are strongly encouraged to maintain heightened biosecurity practices to reduce the risk of disease introduction or spread during animal movement and commingling.



Biosecurity: Still the Best Defense

Even when case numbers decline, avian influenza viruses continue to circulate among wild birds. For this reason, strong biosecurity practices remain essential for all poultry owners, regardless of flock size.

Recommended biosecurity practices include:

- Preventing contact between poultry and wild birds, including securing feed, water, and housing.
- Limiting visitors and controlling access to poultry areas.
- Using dedicated clothing, footwear, and equipment when caring for birds.
- Cleaning and disinfecting equipment, footwear, and vehicles that enter poultry areas.

Continued on page 4

- Monitoring flocks daily for signs of illness or sudden death and reporting concerns promptly.
- Download your copy of our [2026 Avian Health Calendar](#) for additional resources and recommendations (pages 26-32)

Enhanced biosecurity protects not only individual flocks but neighboring California agricultural operations too!

Reporting and Staying Informed

Early reporting remains critical. Poultry and livestock owners who observe unusual illness or deaths should contact the CDFA Hotline at **1-866-922-2473**. Timely reporting allows for rapid response and helps prevent further spread of disease.

For ongoing updates, surveillance information, and biosecurity resources, poultry owners are encouraged to visit [CDFA](#) and [USDA](#) avian influenza webpages and remain engaged with outreach materials distributed throughout the outbreak.

Through continued vigilance, strong partnerships, and consistent biosecurity practices, California remains committed to protecting animal health, supporting agricultural communities, and reducing the impacts of HPAI now and into the future.

Some Cases of Avian Influenza in California Backyard Flocks

By: *Linda Flores, DVM, Laura Bradley, DVM, and Ann Ikelman, DVM, CAHEN*

Don't let their cuteness fool you! By allowing wild waterfowl to crash the party with your backyard poultry flock, you could be exposing your birds to a variety of diseases. There have been several incidents of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), a.k.a. bird flu, in backyard flocks in California involving contact with wild ducks or geese. It is important to limit your flock's exposure to wildlife, especially waterfowl, since they can shed the virus without showing any clinical signs. For the latest updates on detections of HPAI in wild birds visit the [USDA website](#).

Here are some recent scenarios where wild waterfowl were allowed to commingle with backyard poultry flocks for various reasons and which ended in sad consequences for the domestic poultry. One story involved wild waterfowl joining a domestic flock for the daily feeding. The owner enjoyed the presence of the wild birds but eventually she noticed an increase in sickness and sudden death in her chickens. At first nothing seemed too unusual when a single bird passed without any apparent clinical signs, but as the death rate in her flock increased she knew something was wrong. She called her

local veterinarian as well as the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Sick Bird Hotline to report her case and upon investigation it was confirmed to be HPAI. Another owner noticed some mallard ducks coming to eat with her domestic geese and ducks a couple of times and within days three of her birds were dead and one of her geese developed neurologic signs. She submitted one of the carcasses for necropsy at the California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) laboratory herself ([CAHFS BYF Submission Form](#)) and HPAI was diagnosed. She stopped feeding her flock out in the open and instead put up shade cloths and netting over an enclosed pen to exclude the wild birds when she fed her own flock.

The next scenario involves backyard flock premises that have a pond or other standing water that attracts wild waterfowl. These ponds can be a lovely addition to the landscape, but more than one poultry owner who allowed their domestic poultry to range and feed around water features where wild geese and ducks were congregating have lost their flock to bird flu. It is especially dangerous in the fall to late spring migratory and nesting seasons. Best practices include using gravel or other material to eliminate any standing water on your property to prevent introduction of the bird flu virus to your chickens' habitat. At the very least do not allow your poultry to range near ponds where the wild waterfowl will congregate.

Even when the pond is not on your property, if you and/or your dogs walk around parks and ponds with wild waterfowl, the bird flu virus can be brought home on your feet and their paws. Always clean and disinfect your shoes and wash your dogs' feet with soap and water before returning home to your flock after visiting these potentially contaminated areas. These biosecurity precautions also apply to hunters and their dogs. After hunting waterfowl and before attending to your flock you should shower and change into clean clothing and footwear. Do not allow dogs to retrieve or come in contact with birds that appear sick or are dead from natural causes. Dog and cat owners should also avoid feeding raw bird meat from any source.

Finally, you may at times encounter wild birds that are injured or too sick to fly. If a wild bird allows you to catch them



Continued on page 5

that is a bad sign. One man brought a wild goose home and placed it with his flock overnight. The goose died that night and his chickens started dying shortly thereafter. He called our Sick Bird Hotline for assistance and our investigation confirmed that his flock had been infected with HPAI. Trying to rescue wild birds by bringing them home just increases the risk of introducing HPAI to your current flock. It also increases the risk of contracting bird flu for you, your family or even your pets. In this case the owner started to develop flu-like symptoms himself, and his hunting dog was exposed. HPAI can infect not only birds but humans and other animal species too! Monitor all pets who encounter wild waterfowl for signs of illness and contact your local veterinary clinic if you start to see fatigue or respiratory signs. Similarly, contact your primary physician if you experience any flu-like symptoms within 10 days after exposure to sick or dead wild birds.

When you find sick or injured wild birds, it is best to contact a wild bird rescue organization in your area to take care of that bird. You should not attempt to handle that bird yourself. Some humane societies or animal control agencies are equipped to rescue wild birds, or you may need to contact a private organization such as [International Bird Rescue](#). If you find dead wild birds it is best to contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) on their [wildlife mortality reporting page](#).

When protecting your backyard poultry flock from dangerous infectious diseases it is all about the biosecurity. Learn more at the [CDFA Biosecurity for Poultry webpage](#). If you have questions or want to report an increase in sickness or death in your domestic poultry flock, please call the **California Sick Bird Hotline 866-922-2473** for assistance.

New World Screwworm: California Surveillance and Preparedness Update

By: Nick Kimutis, MPH, Livestock Programs

****Status as of January 20, 2026****

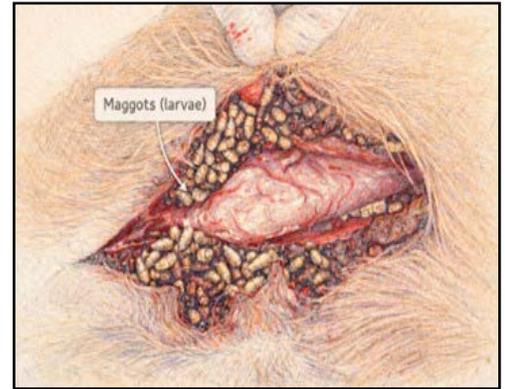
The California Department of Food and Agriculture Animal Health Branch (CDFA) continues preparedness and surveillance activities for New World screwworm (NWS) in collaboration with USDA APHIS. **NWS is not currently present in California or anywhere in the United States**, but recent detections in Mexico highlight the importance of early reporting and rapid response.

Situation Update: Mexico

Recent NWS cases have been identified in Tamaulipas, Mexico, including multiple detections in cattle and swine. These cases represent the northernmost detections to date and are approximately 200 miles from the U.S.–Mexico border. Investigations are ongoing, and recent cases have not been linked to animal movement. USDA is working closely with Mexico's animal health authorities (SENASICA) to gather additional information, assess risk, and evaluate available response actions, including potential release of sterile flies in the region.

California-Mexico Border Surveillance (Trapping Efforts)

To enhance early detection, CDFA and USDA initiated active NWS surveillance along the California–Mexico border in October 2025 with placement of eight traps. The traps include four Swormlure traps in Imperial County and four in San Diego County. Swormlure traps use an attractant that mimics the scent of animal wounds to lure adult NWS flies into the trap. CDFA continues to monitor traps and submit flies twice weekly, as conditions permit.



AI-generated color sketch adapted from a case photo to reduce graphic detail while maintaining recognition features.

Outreach and Preparedness Activities

CDFA began NWS preparedness work several months ago through the formation of internal workgroups, and these activities continue to expand. Outreach has been conducted via webinars, phone calls, emails, and site visits with stakeholders statewide. Educational topics have included recognition of NWS, fly/maggot identification, movement considerations, reporting requirements, sample collection and submission, herd health and management, farm fly control, and treatment options. CDFA is also translating key outreach materials into Spanish to improve accessibility.

The Most Effective Surveillance: Animal Monitoring + Reporting

While trapping supports early detection, the most effective form of NWS surveillance remains close monitoring of animals and prompt reporting of any suspicious larvae in wounds.

Livestock producers, veterinarians, and animal caretakers are urged to remain vigilant, and report concerns immediately to their local CDFA Animal Health Branch district office to support rapid foreign animal disease investigation and early detection.

For more information and guidance, please visit:

- [CDFA NWS Webpage](#)
- [USDA NWS Webpage](#)

Texas Only Accepting Electronic Certificates of Veterinary Inspection for Interstate Movement of Animals Effective January 1, 2026

By: Lauren Schwerfeger, Environmental Scientist, Livestock Movement

In an effort to enhance animal disease traceability, some states are beginning to transition to the use of electronic certificates of veterinary inspection (eCVIs) only. The goal of this transition from paper CVIs to electronics CVIs is to advance electronic sharing of information among federal and state animal health officials, veterinarians, and producers more efficiently. There are many benefits to using eCVIs that are both fueling states transitioning to only accepting eCVIs and USDA setting eCVI usage as a target objective. Such benefits include:

- eCVIs are submitted to the origin state, the destination state, and the producer the moment it is issued by a licensed and accredited veterinarian, making the information readily available to all parties in real time and at the speed of commerce.
- Many eCVI services also include features that keep records of individual animal information such as official IDs, test records, vaccine history, travel history, etc. that can be imported and attached directly onto the eCVI, making it more efficient and easier than handwriting it all onto a paper CVI.
- eCVIs also help reduce transcription errors and increase legibility further enhancing traceability for both state and federal agencies.
- And lastly, sometimes using an eCVI will exempt the need for a permit number, depending on the destination state's entry requirements.

As of January 1, 2026 Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) transitioned to only accepting eCVIs for interstate travel. No paper CVIs are accepted for any animal imports into Texas.



If you are one of our veterinarians who is currently utilizing CDFA Form 77-010-Certificate of Veterinary Inspection for Livestock and Poultry, you may want to visit our [webpage regarding eCVIs](#) to see what eCVI services are available to you for any imports into Texas.

Current approved eCVI providers include:

- [VSPS-USDA Aphis](#)
- [GlobalVetLink \(GVL\)](#)
- [VetSentry](#)
- [myVetTech](#)
- [EquiPass \(Equine only\)](#)



Other states, including, but not limited to, Minnesota (July 1, 2026), Idaho, and Kansas, are in the process of transitioning to only accepting eCVIs for the export and import of animals in the coming months.

Veterinarians should always check the destination state's import requirements prior to issuing a CVI to confirm what type of movement documents are still accepted. Some states have begun updating their websites to inform veterinarians when their new rules will go into effect.

If you have questions regarding livestock movement or eCVIs, please visit our [Animal Disease Traceability website](#) or our [eCVI website](#).

EIA Prevalence in Unsanctioned Horse Racing

By: Katie Hatch, Research Scientist II Equine Program

Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) is considered a Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) in the United States, meaning that it is not considered endemic. However, especially in recent years with a large increase in the unsanctioned horse racing scene, the number of EIA cases has greatly increased. Since 2012, there have been 111 confirmed EIA cases in California. Of these 111 cases, 104 cases were racing Quarter Horses with either confirmed or suspected unsanctioned racing careers.

Continued on page 7

In unsanctioned racing, there are very limited or usually no rules and regulations, especially for equine disease testing. At sanctioned racetracks, there is EIA screening in place where a racing Quarter Horse must have a negative EIA test within 90 days of entering a sanctioned racetrack. At most unsanctioned tracks, there are no EIA test requirements to enter and race.

EIA is a viral disease of all equidae (horses, donkeys, mules and zebras) that belongs to the family that includes the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). It is most commonly spread through contaminated blood exposure, known as iatrogenic transmission, which includes sharing dirty needles, IV sets, multi-use vials, and blood doping.

EIA became a regulatory disease in the United States (US) in 1973, meaning that all cases must be reported to state and federal animal health officials. When an EIA case is confirmed, all equids who are potentially exposed to the EIA positive equid, are required to be quarantined and tested. These investigations commonly include all of the horses under the same trainer and/or all equids at the same facility due to exposure risk given proximity and common management/care staff.

CDFA is constantly working on outreach and education to try and increase awareness and knowledge within the unsanctioned horseracing community as a means to try and prevent iatrogenic transmission of this very preventable disease. We encourage veterinarians to discuss safe and hygienic habits with their clients when it comes to any veterinary care or procedures they are performing on their own animals.

Changes to USDA Payment of Indemnity and Compensation for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

By: Kavishti Kokaram, DVM, DACVPM, Supervising Veterinarian

Poultry producers affected by the current outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) have seen notable changes in the manner in which the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) have been managing indemnity payments following the publishing of an interim rule in the federal register ([9 CFR Part 53](#)). As of December 31st, 2024; USDA, APHIS implemented new biosecurity audit requirements for commercial poultry premises as a condition for receiving indemnity payments related to HPAI. Producers affected by HPAI (infected premises and those within control areas) are required to pass a biosecurity audit as part of this Biosecurity Compliance Audit Program (BCAP) prior to placing birds onto their premises. These measures are being implemented by USDA, APHIS to incentivize producers to continue implementation of adequate biosecurity measures to prevent the introduction and spread of HPAI.

USDA, APHIS has identified that the current paper-based audit process does not always illustrate how well the premises are practicing biosecurity to prevent HPAI infection or reintroduction necessitating this change in approach and a renewed emphasis on the importance of and validation of biosecurity on farm in order to mitigate as much of the associated risks as possible. To be eligible for indemnity payments, commercial poultry producers will be required to pass a BCAP biosecurity audit prior to moving

poultry onto their property which involves an evaluation of a premises' biosecurity plan and its implementation.

In order to support industry and stakeholders in their efforts to meet the requirements of the BCAP program; USDA, APHIS has established two voluntary biosecurity assessments, [Wildlife Biosecurity Assessment \(WBA\)](#) and [Biosecurity Incentive-Focused Assessment \(BIFA\)](#) to provide opportunities for producers to be proactive in their preparedness. Additionally, in support of industry in California, CDFA has established a fully comprehensive BCAP Unit that is integrated into our District offices involving personnel at our two most poultry dense Districts and Headquarters that are certified as auditors and able to provide on-ground support to industry both for BCAP and BIFA assessments. The team is comprised of individuals with extensive experience with various aspects of the poultry industry throughout California and will be vital resources to industry as they navigate the nuances of the BCAP program. The unit is also further augmented by certified auditors located at each of our Districts to additionally provide much needed local support to industry throughout the state.

Further information on the USDA, APHIS BCAP rule and recommendations for HPAI risk mitigation for producers may be found on the [CDFA Avian Influenza webpage](#).



Q Fever: It's Complicated

By: Danny Dickason, DVM, MCM, Small Ruminant Program

Q Fever, the disease caused by the causative agent, a gram-negative intracellular bacteria called *Coxiella burnetii*, is by no means an emerging illness, but it is one that can have devastating and frustrating consequences when it strikes. I won't go into the history behind the disease, as this has already been eloquently covered by CDFA's illustrious Dr. Steven Gallego in the [Animal Health Branch's October 2024 Newsletter](#). Suffice it to say that it was discovered in the 1930s and it is considered endemic to the United States and has been isolated from a number of different domestic and wild mammal species. But when *C. burnetii* infects our domestic sheep and goats, its effects can be striking, emotional, and financially significant due to the abortion and reproductive harm it can cause.



Q Fever is transmitted when animals are exposed to the bacteria in the air or environment. Animal products such as milk, feces, and birth material (fetuses, placentas, amniotic fluid) can all carry the bacteria. And once shed, this bacteria can persist in the environment for years! Infection is often asymptomatic, but it can also result in abortions, stillbirths, early neonatal death, and decreased fertility. Diagnosis is accomplished via Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) or Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) although an animal that tests positive on ELISA isn't necessarily shedding the bacteria and an animal that tests negative could be shedding bacteria, so management decisions should not be based on ELISA alone. And there is unfortunately little evidence of effective treatments. It should be noted that *C. burnetii* is also transmissible to humans (zoonotic), but, as a veterinarian, I won't get into that subject here...

If there aren't a plethora of effective treatments, we must be able to find some solace in simple and effective management techniques for prevention, right? Unfortunately, prevention can also be a frustrating endeavor, but I am here to help! Although we will never eradicate the disease (barring some unforeseen major scientific advance), here are some management practices

you can employ:

1. Manage periparturient animals indoors. This prevents bacteria from spreading downwind to other unaffected animals when bacteria is shed.
2. When the parturition facility is cleaned, do not use a pressure washer, as this can increase the chances of aerosolizing the bacteria. And remember to protect the health of the person(s) cleaning the facility by employing the use of Personal Protective Equipment such as coveralls, boots, goggles, and properly fitted N95 mask, being careful not to touch your face with contaminated items when removing the mask.
3. Composting manure prior to spreading on fields can decrease the infectivity of that manure.
4. Burn or compost (in a controlled/enclosed environment) any aborted fetuses and birth materials.
5. Minimize dust in animal housing (especially parturition) areas.
6. Keep and graze naïve/uninfected animals upwind.

And lastly, don't forget to report any cases of *C. burnetii* to CDFA and USDA (see image).

More information on Q Fever can be found online at:

- [CDFA Q Fever handout](#)
- [WA State Department of Agriculture: Best Practices to Control Q Fever](#)

WHERE TO REPORT:

**CA Department of Food and Agriculture
Animal Health Branch (AHB)
District Offices:**

Redding	530-225-2140
Modesto	209-491-9350
Tulare	559-685-3500
Ontario	909-947-5932

**CDFA Animal Health Branch Headquarters
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone 916-900-5002**

OR

**US Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services
Veterinary Services (VS)
10365 Old Placerville Road, Suite 210
Sacramento, CA 95827-2518
Toll free at 1-877-741-3690**

Foreign Animal Disease Investigations September 16, 2025 – December 15, 2025

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

Monitoring foreign animal diseases (FADs) and their potential impacts on the food supply chain and international trade is crucial for national security. Although these diseases have either been eradicated or have not occurred in the United States, a widespread outbreak could have serious consequences. This includes posing a public health risk if they can be transmitted to humans. Therefore, early detection and immediate action to control and eradicate FADs are essential. California is investing significant resources to protect the livestock industry against FAD outbreaks. You can learn about the critical activities when an FAD is detected in the state by viewing 13 infographics and three short video clips on the [CDFA Preparedness and Response webpage](#).

In the past few years, the New World screwworm (NWS), once eradicated from the US in 1966, has been spreading north from South America through Central America and Mexico, prompting a robust and aggressive response from US authorities. A permanent sterile fly barrier zone in Panama had held the pest in check for decades, but the barrier was breached in 2023. Recent NWS confirmations in northern Mexico have put California's livestock industry on high alert. Following this northward spread, which includes cases in southern Mexico and Central America, California state officials are coordinating with state and federal agencies to prepare for potential infestations.

The Animal Health Branch (AHB) is developing response protocols for surveillance, reporting, and management of any potential infestations, and is urging veterinarians and producers to be vigilant for signs of the pest.

On July 26th, 2024, California's first case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in dairy cows was detected, triggering the activation of the unified incident command system. Since the first detection, the CDFA Animal Health and Food Safety has been responding to the incident in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Veterinary Services.

Between September 16 and December 15, 2025, California FAD diagnosticians investigated 94 FAD suspicious cases (Table 1). All of the 76 investigations conducted on swine 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 if they were FADs until a definitive diagnosis can be made.

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 September 16, 2025 to December 15, 2025

AHB Districts	Disease	Species	Sample Type	Number of Investigations	Destination Lab*
Modesto	Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV)	Bovine	Serum	1	NVSL
	New World Screwworm (NWS)	Bovine	Fly	2	NVSL
	NWS	Canine	Maggots	1	NVSL
	Schmallenberg	Ovine	Tissue	1	NVSL
	FMD, Seneca virus A (SVA)	Porcine	Swab	64	KSVDL

*NVSL: National Veterinary Services Laboratory
KSVDL: Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Continued on page 10

AHB Districts	Disease	Species	Sample Type	Number of Investigations	Destination Lab*
Ontario	NWS	Canine	Maggots	1	NVSL
	VSV	Caprine	Swab	1	NVSL
	VSV	Equine	Swab, Serum	1	NVSL
	NWS	Rabbit	Specimen Container	1	NVSL
	NWS	Fox Squirrel	Maggots	1	NVSL
Redding	FMD, VSV	Bovine	Swab	1	NVSL
	FMD, VSV	Equine	Swab, Serum	1	NVSL
	Classical Swine Fever	Porcine	Carcass	1	NVSL
Tulare	NWS	Alpaca	Maggots	1	NVSL
	FMD, VSV	Bovine	Swab	3	NVSL
	FMD, SVA	Porcine	Swab	12	KSVDL
	NWS	Flies	Fly	1	NVSL

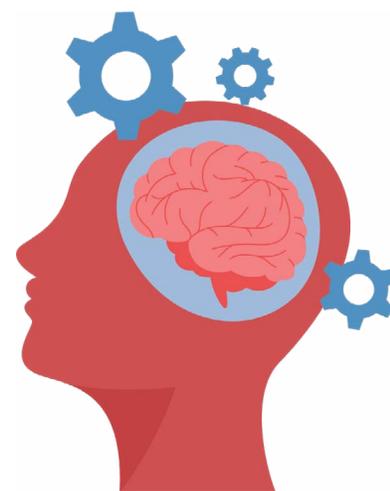
*NVSL: National Veterinary Services Laboratory

KSVDL: Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

What Would Dr. Theodore Woodward Say?

By: Steven Gallego, DVM, Veterinarian in Charge, Redding District

The discipline of psychoacoustics examines how our brains process the sounds we hear. When we hear hoof beats for instance, our brains usually imagine horses, but should they? Maybe the hoof sounds are zebras. Taken a step further, since the arrival of HPAI, many reports of an acutely dead bird or flock (hoof beats) are assumed to be HPAI (the horses), but on numerous occasions that has not been the case. One such incident involved several thousand acutely dead layers whose demise was ultimately linked to *Pasteurella*. Some years ago, a similar die-off occurred due to a faulty area house heater. More recently, while testing for interstate movement, game birds were shown to have been exposed to avian influenza, but not H5N1 HPAI. During my time with CDFA, all livestock reported to CDFA with oral erosions have tested negative for FMD although every so often a practitioner will send me photos of a ruminant's oral lesions that momentarily increases my anxiety. Keep in mind, none of these diagnoses could have been put to rest without appropriate regulatory samples being collected and the excellent



work of our CAHFS lab, which reinforces the importance of submitting samples to an approved diagnostics lab- preferably the CAHFS lab. Another point to remember: whether you think the sounds you hear are coming from horses or zebras, [CDFA's reportable disease list](#) states "Unexplained high mortality or diseased animals" at the top of the list of events needing to be reported.

2026 CDFA Reportable Disease List

By: Kavishthi Kokaram, DVM, DACVPM, Disease Mitigation and Surveillance

The California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) has finalized their review and updates to the List of Reportable Conditions for Animals and Animal Products (also known as the “Reportable Disease List”), and the current list can be found on page 13 as well as available on the [CDFA website](#). Stakeholders can also find additional information with respect to [reporting animal disease](#) on the CDFA website. This website provides valuable links to information and factsheets for the conditions on this List to assist with public awareness and education and is an excellent resource for all stakeholders.

The reportable disease list is reviewed annually by veterinarians, laboratory specialists, species specialists, subject matter experts, and public health advisors, to ensure alignment with the current reportable conditions as listed by the [USDA National List of Reportable Animal Diseases](#) and the [World Animal Health Organization](#) (formerly OIE). As part of the outstanding animal health surveillance system in the United States, accredited veterinarians, diagnosticians and animal industry stakeholders in California are encouraged to be ever vigilant and mindful of their roles and responsibilities that they play in protecting both animal health, and public health.

Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program: Bringing Livestock Veterinarians to Areas in Need

By: Amanda Vance, DVM, Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship Branch

Decreasing numbers of available veterinarians is one of the causes for veterinary deserts where access to medical care is limited for animals in California. The number of veterinarians who work with livestock has continued to decrease, with only about 3% of graduating veterinary students entering the workforce accepting positions in food animal practice in 2025. With the average new veterinarian working in small animal practice earning 40% more than their counterparts working in food animal practice, potential income is one of the factors drawing new veterinary talent away from pursuing work with livestock. To increase the number of veterinarians in areas where there is a shortage of access to care for livestock, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has reinstated the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) for the 2026 federal fiscal year.

What is VMLRP?

By reducing student loan debt, VMLRP is designed as

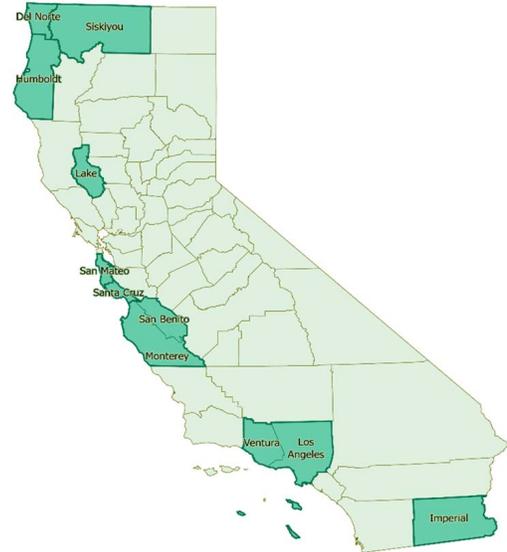


Figure 1: 2026 Nominated VMLRP Shortage Areas

a financial incentive for veterinarians to work with livestock in counties that lack sufficient veterinary service coverage. With a three-year commitment to work in identified shortage areas, veterinarians can earn up to \$120,000 paid directly towards eligible student loans accrued during veterinary school. Identified VMLRP shortage areas in California for federal fiscal year 2026 include the counties of Del Norte, Humboldt, Siskiyou, Lake, San Mateo, Monterey-San Benito, Ventura-Los Angeles, and Imperial. Veterinarians who receive the award in the identified shortage areas of California are required to serve an average of 12 hours per week on livestock species, with half of that time dedicated to ‘must serve species’ identified in the nomination. More information about the award, including eligible species by county, can be found at [Veterinary Services Shortage Situations Map | National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#).

How is CDFA Involved?

CDFA’s Antibiotic Use and Stewardship Branch (AUS) works year-round to decrease the shortage of livestock veterinarians with outreach to identify eligible veterinarians interested in working in nominated shortage areas. The team also facilitates mentorship connections to introduce established practicing veterinarians with new veterinary talent interested in serving in these nominated counties. CDFA AUS team members are available as a resource to help veterinarians navigate the VMLRP application process in the coming months.

A Letter of Intent is the first step in the application process for the grant and needs to be completed by **February 19, 2026**. The completed application must be submitted to USDA NIFA by **March 5, 2026**. Interested veterinarians are encouraged to contact CDFA AUS as soon as possible for assistance.

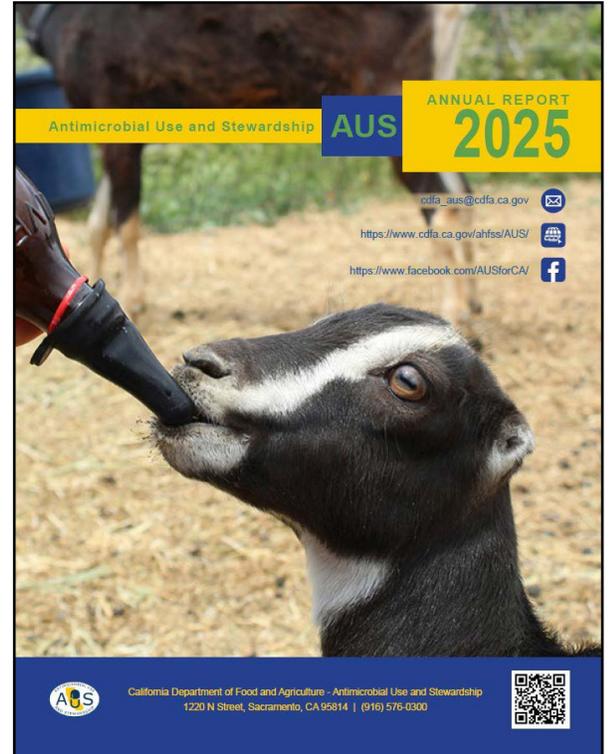
AUS Releases 2025 Annual Report

By: Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship Branch

The Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship (AUS) Branch recently released its [2025 Annual Report](#), which details AUS' work in FY 2024-2025. This fiscal year, AUS produced and updated a number of resources, including a collaborative effort with CDFA's Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety (MPES) Branch to educate licensed industry livestock and poultry meat inspectors on the differences between [antibiotic resistance and antibiotic residues](#).

New this year, the Annual Report includes a Special Section on H5N1 Research Projects which has a selection of high-level summaries of the studies and projects in dairy cattle managed by AUS and funded by a cooperative agreement between CDFA and USDA. These summaries include information regarding the purpose, design, impact, and progress for each project. AUS continues to be proud of its strong collaborations with academic researchers in the field of livestock antibiotic resistance, leading to several peer-reviewed journal publications, as well as oral and poster presentations, which further build upon current scientific knowledge and inform the community.

For more AUS program updates, visit our [website](#).



GOT BIRDS?

We want your birds to be in our next Avian Health Calendar!

To have your photos considered for the 2027 calendar, please submit high quality pictures by May 31st, 2026.

Click [HERE](#) for Photo Tips and Guidelines.

TX 5063



LIST OF REPORTABLE CONDITIONS FOR ANIMALS AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS*

*Pursuant to Section 9101 of the California Food and Agricultural Code, Title 3 California Code of Regulations § 797 and Title 9 Code of Federal Regulations Section 161.4(f)

EMERGENCY CONDITIONS Report within 24 Hours of Discovery	REGULATORY CONDITIONS Report within Two Days of Discovery	MONITORED CONDITIONS Report within 30 Days of Discovery								
<p>WHO MUST REPORT: Any licensed veterinarian, any person operating a diagnostic laboratory, or any person who has been informed, recognizes or should recognize by virtue of education, experience, or occupation, that any animal or animal product is or may be affected by, or has been exposed to, or may be transmitting or carrying any of the following conditions, must promptly report the condition(s) per the lists below.</p> <p>WHAT TO REPORT: Immediately report any animal disease or condition not known to exist in the United States, any event with increased mortality and/or morbidity of unknown cause or source, and any toxicology condition likely to contaminate animals or animal products (meat, milk or eggs).</p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">IN ADDITION TO LISTED CONDITIONS, CALL IF YOU SEE: High morbidity or mortality, vesicles, unexplained neurologic signs, unusual ticks, hemorrhagic septicemias, unusual larvae in wounds, and/or unusual or unexplained illness.</p> <p>Report any emergency, regulatory, or monitored condition within the provided time frame. Some diseases are listed under the major species of concern; if you see compatible signs for such conditions in another species, PLEASE REPORT!</p> <p>MULTIPLE SPECIES</p> <p><u>General, non-specific conditions:</u> Unexplained high mortality or diseased animals; livestock exposed to toxic substances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthrax (<i>Bacillus anthracis</i>)¹ • Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHFV)¹ • Foot-and-mouth disease (FMDV) • Heartwater (<i>Ehrlichia ruminantium</i>) • Japanese encephalitis (JEV) • Melioidosis (<i>Burkholderia pseudomallei</i>) • Rabies of livestock (Rabies virus)¹ • Rift Valley fever (RVFV) • Screwworm myiasis (<i>Cochliomyia hominivorax</i> or <i>Chrysomya bezziana</i>) • Surra (<i>Trypanosoma evansi</i>) • Vesicular stomatitis (VSV) <p>BOVINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African trypanosomiasis (Tsetse fly diseases, <i>Trypanosoma</i> spp.) • Bovine babesiosis (Cattle tick fever, <i>Babesia</i> spp.) • Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (PrP^{Sc}) • Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (<i>Mycoplasma mycoides mycoides</i> small colony type) • Foot-and-mouth disease (FMDV) • Hemorrhagic septicemia (<i>Pasteurella multocida B/Asian</i> or <i>E/African</i>) • Lumpy skin disease (LSDV) • Malignant catarrhal fever (wildbeest-associated form, MCFV) • Rinderpest (RPV) • Schmallenberg virus (SBV) / Akabane virus • Theileriosis / Bovine infectious anemia (<i>Theileria parva parva</i>, <i>T. annulata</i>, <i>T. orientalis</i> Ikeda) <p>CAPRINE/OVINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contagious caprine pleuropneumonia (<i>Mycoplasma capricolum capripneumoniae</i>) • Foot-and-mouth disease (FMDV) • Nairobi sheep disease (NSDV) • Peste des petits ruminants (PPRV) • Schmallenberg virus (SBV) / Akabane virus infections • Sheep pox (SPPV) and goat pox (GTPV) <p>PORCINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African swine fever (ASFV) • Classical swine fever (CSFV) • Foot-and-mouth disease (FMDV) • Nipah virus encephalitis (NV) • Swine vesicular disease (SVDV) <p>AVIAN SPECIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avian influenza (HPAI and H5/H7 LPAI) • Virulent Newcastle disease (velogenic viscerotropic Newcastle disease, vNDV) <p>EQUINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African horse sickness (AHSV) • Dourine (<i>Trypanosoma equiperdum</i>) • Glanders (Farcy; <i>Burkholderia mallei</i>) • Hendra virus infection (HeV) • Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis (VEEV) <p>CERVIDS/LAGOMORPHS/CAMELIDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS-CoV) 	<p>MULTIPLE SPECIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brucellosis (<i>B. melitensis</i>, <i>B. abortus</i>, <i>B. suis</i>)¹ • Pseudorabies / Aujeszky's disease (SuHV-1) • Tuberculosis (<i>Mycobacterium bovis</i>, <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i>)¹ • Tularemia (<i>Francisella tularensis</i>)¹ <p>BOVINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bovine brucellosis (<i>Brucella abortus</i>)¹ • Bovine tuberculosis (<i>Mycobacterium bovis</i>)¹ • Trichomoniasis (<i>Trichomonas foetus</i>) <p>CAPRINE/OVINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caprine and ovine brucellosis (<i>Brucella melitensis</i>)¹ • Scrapie (PrP^{Sc}) <p>PORCINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porcine brucellosis (<i>Brucella suis</i>)¹ • Pseudorabies (Aujeszky's disease; SuHV-1) <p>AVIAN SPECIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fowl typhoid (<i>Salmonella gallinarum</i>) • Influenza A virus H9 and emerging LPAI • Pullorum disease (<i>Salmonella pullorum</i>) • Turkey rhinotracheitis (Avian metapneumovirus) <p>EQUINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contagious equine metritis (<i>Taylorella equigenitalis</i>) • Eastern equine encephalomyelitis (EEEV) • Epizootic lymphangitis (<i>Histoplasma farciminosum</i>) • Equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM secondary to EHV) • Equine infectious anemia (EIAV) • Equine piroplasmiasis (<i>Babesia caballi</i> or <i>Theileria equi</i>) • Western equine encephalomyelitis (WEEV) • West Nile Virus infection (WNV) <p>CERVIDS/LAGOMORPHS/CAMELIDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic wasting disease (PrP^{Sc}) <p style="text-align: center;">WHERE TO REPORT:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CA Department of Food and Agriculture Animal Health Branch (AHB) District Offices:</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>Redding</td> <td>530-225-2140</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Modesto</td> <td>209-491-9350</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tulare</td> <td>559-685-3500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ontario</td> <td>909-947-5932</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">CDFA Animal Health Branch Headquarters 1220 N Street Sacramento, CA 95814 Telephone 916-900-5002</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p style="text-align: center;">US Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services Veterinary Services (VS) 10365 Old Placerville Road, Suite 210 Sacramento, CA 95827-2518 Toll free at 1-877-741-3690</p> <p>REPORT FISH, AMPHIBIAN, CRUSTACEAN, BEE, AND MOLLUSK DISEASES as listed on USDA National List of Reportable Diseases</p>	Redding	530-225-2140	Modesto	209-491-9350	Tulare	559-685-3500	Ontario	909-947-5932	<p>MULTIPLE SPECIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluetongue (BTV) • Echinococcosis / hydatidosis (<i>Echinococcus</i> spp) • Epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHDV) • John's disease (Paratuberculosis; <i>Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis</i>) • Leishmaniasis (<i>Leishmania</i> spp.) • Q Fever (<i>Coxiella burnetii</i>) • Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV-2)¹ <p>BOVINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anaplasmosis (<i>Anaplasma marginale</i> or <i>A. centrale</i>) • Bovine cysticercosis (<i>Taenia saginata</i>) • Bovine genital campylobacteriosis (<i>Campylobacter fetus venerealis</i>) • Bovine viral diarrhea (BVD, HoBiPeV) • Enzootic bovine leukosis (BLV) • Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (Bovine herpesvirus-1) • Malignant catarrhal fever (MCFV, sheep-associated form) <p>CAPRINE/OVINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caprine arthritis/encephalitis • Contagious agalactia (<i>Mycoplasma agalactiae</i>, <i>M. capricolum</i> subsp. <i>capricolum</i>, <i>M. mycoides</i> subsp. <i>capri</i>, <i>M. putrefaciens</i>) • Enzootic abortion of ewes (Ovine chlamydiosis; <i>Chlamydia abortus</i>) • Ovine progressive pneumonia (Maedi-Visna virus) • Ovine epididymitis (<i>Brucella ovis</i>) • <i>Salmonella abortusovis</i> infection • Sheep scabies (Body mange; <i>Psoroptes ovis</i>) <p>PORCINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porcine cysticercosis (<i>Taenia solium</i>) • Porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRSV) • Senecavirus A infection (SVA) • Swine enteric coronavirus diseases, including transmissible gastroenteritis • Swine influenza (SIV or S-OIV) • Trichinellosis (<i>Trichinella spiralis</i>) <p>AVIAN SPECIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avian infectious bronchitis (IBV) • Avian infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT) • Duck viral hepatitis (DHAV) • Goose parvovirus infection (GPV) • Infectious bursal disease / Gumboro disease (vIBDV) • Influenza A viruses (see Emergency Conditions for HPAI and H5/H7 LPAI) • Mycoplasmosis (<i>Mycoplasma synoviae</i> and <i>Mycoplasma gallisepticum</i>) • Ornithosis / psittacosis / avian chlamydiosis (<i>Chlamydia psittaci</i>) <p>EQUINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ulcerative lymphangitis / Pigeon fever (<i>Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis</i>) • Equine herpesvirus-1 and 4 infections (excluding EHM) • Equine influenza (EIV) • Equine viral arteritis (EAV) • Strangles (<i>Streptococcus equi</i> subsp. <i>equi</i>) <p>CERVIDS/LAGOMORPHS/CAMELIDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camel pox (Camelpox virus) • Myxomatosis (Myxoma virus) • Rabbit hemorrhagic disease (RHDV)
Redding	530-225-2140									
Modesto	209-491-9350									
Tulare	559-685-3500									
Ontario	909-947-5932									

¹ Diseases in blue, seen in any species, are also reportable to your [local health department](#).

Animal Health Branch Staff Biographies – Equine Medication Monitoring Program

The Equine Medication Monitoring Program (EMMP) is a state-run regulatory and oversight program managed by the California Department of Food and Agriculture that helps ensure fairness and integrity in public horse events across California. It operates under the *California Equine Medication Rule* found in the Food and Agricultural Code and related regulations.

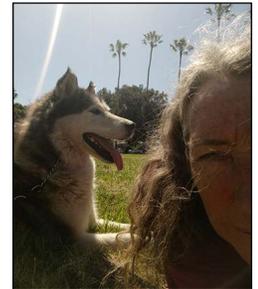
Debbie McDougald, Agricultural Technician III

Hi, my name is Debbie McDougald and I have been working for the Equine Medication Monitoring Program as a tester for 35 years. My full-time occupation is working for the US Forest Service where I wear many hats. I am the Sierra NF Animal Packer and oversee our herd of 19 horses and mules. I am also a District Recreation Officer, and I frequently go on fire assignments as a packer or a driver or as logistical support. The large number of fires in the last 10 years has really cut down on my availability for drug testing during the summer and fall months.



Dawn Newman, Agricultural Technician I

My name is Dawn Newman, I serve as an Agricultural Technician I, bringing over twelve years of hands-on experience in the field. In the context of horse shows, my role is that of a Drug Tester. Prior to this, I spent 11 years as an Animal Control Officer for the City of Los Angeles, which provided me with valuable experience in managing the challenges of equine events. Outside of my professional life, I enjoy trail riding, reading, watching movies, hiking, and savoring the many pleasures life has to offer.



Trisha Mitchel, Agricultural Technician I

My name is Trisha Mitchel. I have been with the Equine Medication Monitoring Program for the past 12 years as an Agriculture Technician. Before I joined the Department of Food and Agriculture, Animal Health Branch my career of 20 plus years was in finance/credit union management. My hometown is San Diego, California where I also work for the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club. My hobbies are my two beautiful horses and all things equestrian. I also enjoy culinary arts during my down time.



Sarah Tighe, Agricultural Technician III

Hello. I'm Sarah Tighe. I celebrated my first anniversary as an EMMP Tester on January 16, 2026. Prior to working for CDFA Animal Health Branch I worked at the UC Davis Veterinary Medicine Teaching Hospital as a Registered Veterinary Technician in the Equine Intensive Care Unit. I retired after 21 years of service.

Away from work you will find me hanging out with my three rescue dogs Monterey Jack, Esther, and Amigo. I also enjoy visiting with friends, traveling, eating out, and taking Pilates classes.



Michelle Petersen, Agricultural Technician I

Michelle Petersen is an Agricultural Technician with the Equine Medication Monitoring Program. Michelle has worked for the program for seven years. She graduated from Cal Poly, SLO in 2011 with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and a concentration in Marketing Management. Michelle grew up raising market cattle and sheep and now does the same with her daughters. She volunteers her time to support local agricultural youth through the 4-H program sharing her love for livestock and experience as a show stock competitor. She looks forward to continuing her work with the Animal Health Branch and advocating for California's equine industry.



Animal Health Branch Staff Biographies – Biosecurity Compliance Audit Program

Field BCAP staff biographies will be published with other field staff.

Audrey Sam, Office Technician

My name is Audrey Sam, and I was born and raised in the Elk Grove/ Sacramento, CA. I did not grow up around animals, agriculture, or farming, aside from having dogs and playing with my grandma's backyard chickens when I was young. On my free time, I like to cook, try new foods and drinks, and watch football games, when the season allows.

I graduated from UC Davis Spring of 2025 with my B.S. in Food Science. I initially was on the path to becoming a Physician Assistant, but I found much more interest in the food industry. During my time in school, I was a laboratory technician for a UC Davis Food Science and Technology research lab, that focused on yeast microbiology in agriculture, food innovation and more. I was a part of a couple research projects that utilized yeast species from the Phaff Yeast Collection, which is one of the largest public collections of wild yeasts. I later ventured out seeking experience for public health and became a student assistant with the Department of Health Care Services in the Provider Enrollment Division. Furthermore, I wanted to combine my knowledge of food regulation and public health, which led me to intern with the United States Department of Agriculture, with the Food Safety Inspection Services, as a Consumer Safety Inspector Trainee in the Alameda District. With the USDA, I travelled to various poultry and livestock slaughterhouses, and meat processing facilities, ensuring food safety. That is where I knew I had strong desires to work with animals, the public, and the food supply, ultimately leading me to CDFA.



Emma Middlemiss, Senior Environmental Scientist

Emma Middlemiss is excited to step into her new role as the BCAP Program Lead. She has an Environmental Scientist B.S. degree from UC Riverside and a Master's degree in Public Health from San Jose State University. Prior to working at the state, she has experience working for various environmental consulting companies in Southern California and as a water well inspector for Yolo County. She has worked at CDFA since 2018, previously working as an Environmental Scientist in the Egg Safety and Quality Management (ESQM) Program within the Meat, Poultry, and Egg Safety (MPES) Branch, as well as a Senior Environmental Scientist in the Produce Safety Program (PSP) in Inspection Services. She says it's wonderful to be back with AHFSS. On her free time, she enjoys traveling, playing with her pup Kai, or playing goalie for her soccer team.



Contact Information

■ Animal Health Branch

Dr. Amanda Murray, Branch Chief

1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Headquarters: (916) 900-5002
Fax: (916) 900-5333
Permit Line: (916) 900-5052

Email: ahbfeedback@cdfa.ca.gov
Website: 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

Dr. Adam Smith
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. Amanda Murray, Acting State Veterinarian
Dr. Stephen Beam, Director
(916) 900-5000

■ Other AHFSS Branches

Bureau of Livestock Identification
Harry Piek, Chief
(916) 900-5006

Milk and Dairy Food Safety
Robin Trindade, Assistant Branch 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 Scigliabaglio
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.