



Animal Health Branch News

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Mission Statement

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

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Bovine Tuberculosis Found in Fresno County Dairy

By Dr. Alana McQuarry

Bovine tuberculosis (TB) was recently diagnosed in a large dairy herd in Fresno County, California. During routine slaughter surveillance, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspectors obtained a suspicious lymph node lesion from a 69-month-old cow and submitted it for laboratory evaluation. The lesion was histocompatible for tuberculosis and positive on Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) for *M. tuberculosis* complex, presumably *M. bovis*. Confirmation of the diagnosis by culture is anticipated by February 2008.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the USDA veterinarians TB tested the suspect cow's birth herd and found 63 caudal fold test responders; four of these cows were also PCR positive. State and federal animal health officials are working closely with the dairy farmer and veterinarian to implement control strategies to eradicate the disease and avoid possible spread.

TB is a chronic, slowly progressive bacterial disease that may be transmitted by clinically healthy infected animals. TB is a regulated disease; veterinarians performing TB caudal fold tests should report all responders to CDFA within 48 hours. Humans can contract bovine TB by consuming unpasteurized cheeses and raw milk from cattle affected with *M. bovis*. Almost all milk and milk products produced in California are pasteurized. All cattle processed for meat are inspected at slaughter for evidence of TB infection. Animals with suspicious lesions are rejected for consumption.

Ongoing TB prevention and control

Continued on page 2

Equine Piroplasmiasis - Foreign Animal Disease or Endemic?

By Dr. Kent Fowler, AHB Chief
Dr. Timothy J. Boone, Equine Programs

The AHB staff are experts at multi-tasking, whether we want to be or not. Over a day's work we may quickly move from avian influenza surveillance to bovine TB infection, from analysis of a legislative bill to the enhanced Bovine Trichomonosis Program, or from swine pseudorabies to a suspected equine foreign animal disease. An example of the latter is equine piroplasmiasis, of which we have been spending some time discussing at a national level.

Equine piroplasmiasis (EP) is currently classified as a Foreign Animal Disease to the U.S. Due to past import testing issues, the causal agents, *Babesia equi* and/or *Babesia caballi*, possibly exist at an undetermined prevalence level in our country's resident horse population. To obtain a meaningful assessment on this serious uncertainty, a resolution introduced by Dr. Fowler, as Chairman of the EP Subcommittee, was passed at the October 2007 United States Animal Health Association annual meeting in

Continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Mission Statement	1
Contact Information	1
Bovine Tuberculosis Found in Fresno County Dairy	1-2
Equine Piroplasmiasis - Foreign Animal Disease or Endemic? . . .	1-2
Enhanced Bovine Trichomonosis Control Program	2
Equine West Nile Virus 2007 Summary	2
Projected 2008 CA Avian Influenza Surveillance	3
2008 Veterinary CE Seminars	3
Staff Biographies	3
Premises Registration	4

Bovine Tuberculosis - Continued

strategies are essential for all producers. Veterinarians should encourage producers to follow import regulations, to prevent breeding cattle contacts with cattle of Mexican origin, to prohibit consumption of unpasteurized milk by dairy employees and to cooperate with government officials performing TB investigations. Additionally, permanent identification of animals and maintenance of accurate records of animal movements into and out of a herd are recommended best management practices that are an asset to animal health officials conducting disease investigations, such as TB. 

Equine Piroplasmosis - Continued

Reno, Nevada. The EP Subcommittee found the resolution to be the best viable means of estimating the prevalence of this disease within our native equine population.

The resolution requests access to residual banked equine infectious anemia (EIA) serum samples tested in National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratories across the U.S. Serum samples from these laboratories forwarded to National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) will be assayed by c-ELISA, the official import test, for the presence of antibodies to EP. Mandatory preconditions of the survey stipulate that samples will not identify the individual equid or the geographical region of the country where the samples were obtained. The survey is being conducted as a national "non-regional" survey.

The survey results could have a dramatic impact and resolve the uncertainty of prevalence of EP in the domestic U.S. horse population. If survey results indicate significant prevalence of EP infection in our horse population, then responsible efforts to address the disease can be made. A survey result finding no indication of infection would be very beneficial and welcomed information. 

Enhanced Bovine Trichomonosis Control Program

Since implementation of the enhanced Bovine Trichomonosis Program on October 5, 2007, forty-two California cattle herds are identified as infected with *Trichomonas foetus*. For each infected herd, two to fifteen other cattle herds are classified "exposed".

Trichomonosis Positive Herds 01/17/08

Redding District	23
Modesto District	10
Tulare District	9

Owners of potentially exposed neighboring cattle herds receive CDFA notification of the findings, herd bull quarantines, and the requirements for herd bull testing. Exposed herd bull testing is still in progress, so the extent of exposed herd infection is not fully known. To date, two exposed herds are reclassified as infected herds after positive bull tests were received.

Veterinarians and laboratories require approval for their participation in the Bovine Trichomonosis Program.

California Trichomonosis Program

Approved Veterinarians	211
Approved Laboratories	63
Trained Lab Personnel	76

Epidemiologic data collection of infected herds is in progress. Data analysis will provide an improved understanding of the disease in California cattle herds. An online, statewide trichomonosis database for entry and management of all test results is under development and nearing completion. Veterinarians, with approved laboratories for trichomonosis testing, will be able to submit test results directly to the online database. Veterinarians, with approval to perform trichomonosis sampling, will continue to use paper forms with their sample submissions to approved laboratories, such as the California Animal Health & Food Safety Laboratory.

The CDFA website is a resource for information on *Trichomonas foetus*, the Bovine Trichomonosis Program and downloadable Trichomonosis Test Report forms.

http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/Trichomonosis_Info.htm. Email questions to trich@cdfa.ca.gov or call CDFA at 916-654-1447. 

Equine West Nile Virus 2007 Summary

The number of horses tested for West Nile Virus (WNV) and number of confirmed equine cases in California declined from previous years in 2007. The statewide distribution of confirmed cases was from as far north as Siskiyou County, through the north and central valleys, to San Diego County. Four confirmed cases in both San Diego and Kern counties represented the highest number of cases for the fourteen counties with clinical cases. As in previous years, the peak case occurrence was in mid to late August.

Horse owners are better informed about WNV and the importance of annual WNV vaccination. Although endemic, the CDFA, the California Department of Public Health, and local Mosquito and Vector Control agencies actively track new cases and provide public outreach through brochures, websites, and personal contacts since this zoonotic disease may be fatal to both humans and horses.

Summary WNV Cases 2007

Horses Tested	346
Horses Test Positive	28
Fully Vaccinated	1
Partially Vaccinated	7
No WNV Vaccination	20
Euthanasia or death	14
% Case Fatality Rate	50

California equine WNV information is on the CDFA website: http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/WNV_Info.html. Email questions about WNV to: WNVirus@cdfa.ca.gov. 

Projected 2008 CA Avian Influenza Surveillance

Proposed 2008 Avian Influenza (AI) Surveillance work plans and a request for funding were submitted to USDA in December 2007. Of top priority for 2008 is the monthly surveillance of California's thirty-five Live Bird Markets (LBM), regular testing of birds from producers that supply the LBM and the training of LBM haulers in biosecurity practices for shipments to the LBM. Poultry for sale at swap meets, auctions and in sixty-two feed stores across the state will be sampled and tested monthly. Backyard poultry and gamefowl will be sampled and tested on a more limited basis. CDFA will continue collaboration with the Avian Sciences Extension Service of the University of California in the promotion of the Game Fowl Quality Assurance Program to promote biosecurity and minimize disease spread within the game fowl industry.

Upland game bird surveillance will be resource driven. Traditional door-to-door surveillance is to only be done as necessary due to the limited cost-benefit from past use of this surveillance method. Since pet stores generally market psittacines and other non-poultry birds, surveillance will only be conducted if, and when, necessary.

In addition to fulfilling the surveillance plans, District personnel will promptly respond to sick bird calls received. As an adjunct to surveillance activities, no-fee laboratory diagnostic services are available for owners of flocks with less than 1,000 birds to aid in the prompt detection of AI or Exotic Newcastle Disease (END). Early detection enhances prompt response to incursion of these diseases. In conjunction with surveillance activities, public outreach and distribution of educational materials will continue. 

2008 Veterinary Continuing Education Seminars

CDFA AHB Veterinary Continuing Education (CE) Seminars in 2008 will

focus on TB, Foreign Animal Diseases and Animal Disease Traceability. Details of the scheduled seminars will be mailed to practitioners in the near future. Please plan to join us.

CDFA AHB 2008 CE Seminars 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

- 3/5 Hilmar Cheese Co., Hilmar
- 3/6 Butte Creek Country Club, Chico
- 3/12 McLintocks Restaurant, Pismo Beach
- 3/17 Heritage Complex, Tulare
- 3/26 Radisson Hotel, Covina



Staff Biographies:



*In his free time,
Dan likes to fish.*

Daniel L. Rolfe, DVM, MPVM grew up on a wheat and cattle ranch in Oregon's Mid-Columbia basin. After high school, he joined the Navy and served three tours in Viet Nam on submarines. Prior to the end of his enlistment, he started college at Solano JC. He continued his college education in San Diego, where his interests centered on cellular physiology and molecular biology. He attended the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, where he graduated with honors, then completed an internship at the Western School of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and a food animal residency at UC Davis. After completion of his postgraduate work, he spent 15 years in equine and large animal ambulatory practice in San Diego County. Although rewarding, treating individual animals did not satisfy his desire to practice preventative medicine on a large scale, so when the opportunity to join the AHB of CDFA arose, he took it.

Since joining the AHB, Dr. Rolfe has performed the routine duties of a field Veterinary Medical Officer, but was also given the opportunity to take a year off to earn an MPVM degree. This training has been very helpful in developing his expertise in epidemiology, database development and spatial epidemiology.

One of his more rewarding career experiences was the month spent in Great Britain assisting in the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak. The knowledge he gained in Cumbria was certainly helpful when dealing with the END outbreak in California.

Tom O'Berry is a Senior Livestock Inspector in the Modesto District. As a product of West Texas, he grew up in the cowboy life. Before beginning his career in the AHB, he had experience working with livestock in a variety of capacities. He worked in feedlots and slaughter plants, trained racehorses, rode rough stock on the rodeo circuit, hauled racehorses around the country, worked on several large cattle ranches, and even built a few houses in between.

In his 24 years with the AHB, Tom has been stationed at various times in most areas of California. In addition to his routine regulatory duties, he has served on eradication efforts directed at brucellosis, TB, AI, END, and Pseudorabies.

Tom lives with his wife and son on a ranch near Lone, where he also supervises their horses, cattle, and dogs. Tom's spare time is spent practicing team roping with the hope that he will one day become almost as proficient a roper as his wife, Annette. 





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Help Protect California's Livestock and Support Animal Disease Traceability

You can take the first step to improve the reliability and accuracy of our national traceability system by obtaining a premises identification number for your veterinary practice. We encourage you to communicate the value of premises registration to your clients. An effective national traceability system is only possible with cooperation between the livestock industry and animal health agencies, such as CDFA, to maintain the health of animal agriculture, to protect our livelihood and the public health, and to reduce the hardships to agriculture caused by catastrophic animal disease events.

Please visit www.californiaid.org or call 866-325-5681 to get your premises number and learn more about the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). CDFA staff members are available to assist you with your questions and to provide current factual information about NAIS.

Animal Health Branch Staff Sacramento Headquarters

