CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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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Nonambulatory Cattle and the Law

Dr. Dennis Wilson

The June 2009 issue of *California Dairy Review* carried the following article to inform dairy producers of the law regarding the handling of nonambulatory cattle. Private veterinary practitioners are an invaluable information resource for the livestock-owning public for preparing an on-farm plan for nonambulatory cattle.

Nonambulatory Cattle and a New Law That Could Impact You

California Penal Code 599 (f) prohibits anyone from selling, consigning, or shipping a nonambulatory (downer) animal for purpose of delivering the animal to a slaughterhouse, stockyard, auction, market agency or dealer. It also prohibits a person from accepting such an animal for transport or delivery to a slaughterhouse, stockyard, auction, market agency or dealer. Note the law requires stockyards, auctions, marketing agencies or dealers to take immediate action either providing immediate veterinary care or humanely euthanizing a nonambulatory animal. Such animals at a slaughter facility must be humanely euthanized immediately. Slaughter facilities are prohibited from processing, butchering, or selling meat from nonambulatory cattle. The law also requires that while in transit to any of the destinations mentioned that a nonambulatory animal may not be dragged, or pushed with equipment at any time, but shall be moved with a sling or on a stoneboat or other sled-like or wheeled conveyance.

The consequence of this crime is imprisonment in a county jail, not to exceed one year, or a fine for $20,000 or both. Having a plan for managing nonambulatory cattle, including how to euthanize them, is more important than ever. The California Dairy Quality As-

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Vesicular Stomatitis in Texas and New Mexico

Dr. Anita Edmondson

In June 2009, vesicular stomatitis (VS) was confirmed in horses in Starr County, TX and in De Baca County, NM. Signs of VS include blisters and sloughing of the skin on the muzzles, tongue, teats and above the hooves of susceptible livestock. Lesions are identical to those of foot and mouth disease (FMD) when seen in cloven-hoofed animals. Horses are not susceptible to FMD, but blister-like lesions on horses should be promptly examined by a veterinarian. The virus is abundant in the clear vesicular fluid and vesicle covering, and is spread by biting insects and animal-to-animal contact. VS lesions usually heal in two to four weeks; severe cases may cause pain and production losses in dairy cattle. VS-infected animals and their herd mates are usually quarantined until all lesions have healed.

To reduce the risk of introducing VS-infected animals into California, livestock entry requirements now include that **all horses, cattle, and swine *originating from any state where vesicular stomatitis has been diagnosed since June 1, 2009 (except cattle and swine transported directly to slaughter) must be accompanied by a certificate of veterinary**

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Nonambulatory Cattle - *Continued*

surance Program is working with industry to provide humane euthanasia training. Contact your milk handler for more information regarding dates. It is advisable to work with your veterinarian to develop an on-farm plan to handle nonambulatory cattle. It is recommended that you work with your hauler to be certain that they are aware of the law and are able meet the requirements of the law.

Remember, we all have a responsibility to ensure that livestock are always treated with proper care and handling along the entire food chain – at the farm, during transport and marketing and at harvest. Please do your part to uphold that responsibility and demand that others in the industry do the same.

Vesicular Stomatitis - *Continued*

inspection signed by an accredited veterinarian that includes the following statement:

"The animals represented on this certificate have not originated from a premises or area under quarantine for vesicular stomatitis, or a premises on which vesicular stomatitis has been diagnosed in the past 30 days. I have examined the animals and have found no signs of vesicular stomatitis."

*For purposes of this requirement, ***"originating"*** means horses, cattle, and swine that initially leave the VS-infected state and come to California, or those that leave California, visit an infected state, and then return to California.

Additionally, the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB) now requires that any horse coming from a VS-infected state must test negative for VS within the thirty (30) days prior to entering race tracks and/or CHRB-approved training centers.

For further information, contact Dr. Rick M. Arthur, Equine Medical Director, CHRB, at (916) 263-6000.

Live Bird Market Surveillance

California live bird markets (LBM) meet unique needs of many ethnic communities across the state. LBMs are a viable source for different types of poultry than those available for purchase in most supermarket chains. Various breeds of chickens and types of poultry, to include guineas, chukars, quail, ducks, turkeys, pheasants and squab, are purchased from farmers by the LBMs and then sold and custom slaughtered for customers. Many individuals want to see and select the live bird prior to slaughter to know that the poultry they are buying is healthy and fresh. Some LBMs cater to certain ethnic groups by marketing older, less fatty chickens that are preferred for use in traditional dishes. LBMs also cater to some religious sects by providing specific methods of handling of the birds before and during slaughter to fulfill religious requirements. LBM buildings and facilities are inspected, approved, and licensed by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) Branch. MPI regularly inspects LBM facilities for compliance with food safety parameters, to include plant sanitation and hygiene.

LBMs in California are an important component of the poultry industry for targeted avian influenza surveillance. Historically, low pathogenicity avian influenza (LPAI) viruses have been associated with the LBM systems in other countries and on the east coast of the US. Although LPAI viruses cause little or no clinical illness in poultry, the H5 and H7 subtypes have the potential to mutate into high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) subtypes, which are lethal to most poultry. If detected, HPAI would have serious economic and trade implications for the California commercial poultry industry and the US.

In 2004, the CDFA AHB, the United States Department of Food and Agriculture (USDA) and University of California at Davis (UCD) Cooperative Extension jointly initiated a series of meetings with California LBM owners and their suppliers to discuss concerns regarding H5 and H7 LPAI viruses in the California LBM system. The Southern California Cultural Heritage Association (SCCHA) and UCD Cooperative Extension drew up a plan to detect (surveillance programs), prevent and control the disease in the LBM system. Producers' farms and poultry distributors that supply the markets are important elements of the LBM system included in the comprehensive plan.

Today, CDFA and USDA animal health officials work cooperatively with UCD Cooperative Extension and the LBM industry in maintaining surveillance programs to ensure that the California LBM system remains free of avian influenza. If detected, the LBM system has an efficient program in place to swiftly trace and eradicate the disease. Additionally, outreach programs and educational materials for all sectors of the poultry industry, from backyard growers to commercial production operations, are available as part of ongoing efforts to protect this valuable industry.

Voluntary Swine Influenza Virus Surveillance Program

In early 2009, Swine Influenza Type A H1N1 (2009) was detected in the human population. The human health implications of this novel virus strain are still evolving. This strain contains avian and human genes and swine genes of North American lineage. Notably, it also contains neuraminidase and matrix protein genes of Eurasian swine origin not previously identified in North America. The strain has not been identified in the U.S. swine population. To ensure early detection if Type A H1N1 (2009) is introduced into the U.S. swine population, the USDA accelerated implementation of a voluntary swine influenza virus (SIV) surveillance program.

The program goals are: 1) to determine if the novel H1N1 currently exist in U.S. swine, 2) to detect new influenza

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SIV Surveillance - *Continued*

virus strains in swine in a timely manner; 3) if present, to determine virus distribution, and 4) to determine genetic characteristics of novel influenza viruses necessary for vaccine and diagnostic test development. The program will also allow differentiation of this novel virus strain from endemic SIV and monitoring of genetic changes of SIV isolates in pigs with influenza-like illness (ILI).

Surveillance components include:

1. **Swine populations with a known link to a human infection of H1N1 Flu Outbreak Virus.** The extent of swine sampling will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
2. **On-farm swine populations with pigs that are showing influenza-like illness.**
3. **Sick pigs at first points of concentration or commingling events** since auctions houses, markets, fairs, zoos and exhibitions present increased potential for disease spread and/or human exposure.

Live swine surveillance sampling is by collection of nasal swabs. Sampling is most effective on clinically ill pigs since virus shedding in non-clinical animals is very low. Quarantine of sampled animals is not recommended unless clear evidence exists to suggest human health risk. Pig mortalities meeting the surveillance case definition should have lung tissue samples collected. The National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa and several other select laboratories will perform genetic sequencing of positive samples to distinguish influenza virus type and subtypes.

Animal Health officials routinely perform disease monitoring and prevention activities. Vigilance through surveillance, testing, and monitoring is an effective safeguarding system for livestock populations. From the beginning of the novel virus outbreak, CDFA AHB and USDA VS focused on disease surveillance, risk communication, and outreach to strengthen the general biosecurity measures on swine premises. The California Animal Health and Food Safety Services laboratory is performing SIV testing on all submitted swine free of charge. Inspectors from CDFA MPI routinely monitor pigs for ILI at state-licensed plants. Appropriate actions to contain the virus and protect animal and human health would be taken if the novel H1N1 virus is found in California swine.

Bovine TB in the U.S.

The U.S. bovine tuberculosis (TB) eradication campaign began in 1917, when TB caused about one out of every nine human deaths, and about 10% of those had the bovine form of disease. The eradication campaign systematically tested and retested cattle, destroying those that reacted positively – a test-and-removal program. The country reached a very low but persistent level of infection at the end of the century; recently, the number of infected cattle herds has been increasing:

California TB investigation: The San Bernardino County dairy herd in which a TB-infected cow was found in January 2009 has retested negative and will continue to be quarantined under a test-and-removal plan. Trace herds are being tested; no additional infected animals have been found. The Fresno County dairy herd continues to test negative under its test-and-removal plan. Of the four herds detected in California since January 2008, strain typing indicates the cases had three separate sources, and one herd was affected by the movement of an infected cow.

Texas confirms TB in a dairy herd*:* The herd was detected in April 2009 during testing for a dispersal sale. Infection was confirmed in June 2009. The epidemiological investigation is on going. This herd is under a test-and-removal protocol.

Nebraska confirms TB in a beef herd: The herd was detected in early June 2009 through slaughter surveillance and infection was confirmed in the 750 head cow–calf herd through live animal testing. Forty-two (42) herds have been quarantined in Nebraska for TB testing. Colorado and South Dakota traces are being investigated.

Nebraska confirms TB in a captive cervid herd: The herd was identified in April 2009 through slaughter surveillance and was depopulated. The facility is about 75 miles from the infected beef herd; the cases are not related and are caused by different strains of TB. Wildlife surveillance has begun around this herd. Infected captive cervid herds do not affect the cattle TB status of a state.

Indiana confirms TB in three captive cervid herds*:* The first herd was identified through slaughter surveillance in May 2009. Approximately 80 elk, red, fallow, and sika deer were depopulated. This herd was located two miles from a cattle herd that was the source of a TB infected cow detected at slaughter in December 2008. The investigation implicated two additional captive cervid herds, both are now confirmed.

Michigan identified one new affected beef herd through annual surveillance testing and was depopulated. One dairy herd continues under a test and removal protocol since one infected cow was identified at the quarantine release test, so the testing protocol had to be started over again. Two captive cervid herds were identified through surveillance and are under quarantine. Michigan has detected 46 affected cattle herds since 1998. **Infected free- ranging whitetail deer** continue to be the primary reservoir for TB in Michigan's outbreak; over 600 infected deer have been identified. Elk, carnivores (bear, coyote, and bobcat), and small mammals (raccoons, opossum and a domestic cat) have also been found infected with bovine TB.

Minnesota has had 12 infected beef herds since 2005; infected free-ranging whitetail deer have been identified through active surveillance.

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TB Update - *Continued*

New York confirmed TB in a captive cervid herd (fallow and red deer) in October 2008 when a fallow deer tested positive during routine skin testing. The herd was depopulated.

New Mexico detected and depopulated infected cattle herds in 2007 and 2008. One dairy, quarantined since 2002, completed its test-and-removal protocol in April 2009.

No TB found in North Dakota beef herd: The 270-head source herd, for a TB-infected cow found on slaughter surveillance, tested negative and was released from quarantine. Neighboring herds are undergoing testing and hunter-harvested deer, elk and moose were tested.

The Future of the National Bovine Tuberculosis Program is the focus of a forum being hosted by The United States Animal Health Association on July 20-21, 2009 in Denver, CO. Cattle producers, veterinarians, regulators, diagnosticians, and wildlife specialists are participating to prioritize the future bovine TB program. www.usaha.org

Enhanced National Veterinary Accreditation Program

The multi-year effort to enhance the Voluntary National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP) is moving toward implementation. Accredited veterinarians (AVs) should be aware of the changes in the NVAP and of their responsibilities during the implementation process. Regulations enhancing NVAP will be published in November 2009. Once finalized and effective, a three-month notification and outreach program to accredited veterinarians (AVs) will begin. The notification period would end on March 1, 2010. AVs would have until June 1, 2010 for filing the necessary paperwork to avoid expiration of their accreditation.

Program changes include that AVs will have to file forms to confirm participation and designate an accreditation category, either Companion Animal or Food & Companion Animal. Accreditation renewal will be every three years and continuing education will be required to maintain accreditation.

Your continued participation in the NVAP is strongly encouraged.

Staff Biographies

Dr. Edward Henry received his doctorate in 1974 from the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. After several years of private practice, he became the staff veterinarian at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. He went on to be a clinical instructor at UC Davis and the School of Veterinary Medicine at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC. In 1988, he returned to private dairy practice in Tulare for 16 years prior to joining CDFA in July 2004. In March 2007, he was certified as a Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician at the USDA Plum Island Animal Disease Center. He has given presentations on biosecurity and agroterrorism to animal health groups, veterinarians, and law enforcement groups, including the FBI, during his tenure with the AHB in the Tulare District. Now with the mandatory furloughs, Ed and his wife, Bobbie, plan to see more of their grandchildren in Grover Beach and Orange County.