Message from Animal Health Branch Chief
by Kent Fowler, DVM, AHB Chief

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), Animal Health Branch (AHB) dates its origins back to the creation of the Office of the State Veterinarian in 1899, “to protect the health of all domestic animals of the state from all contagious and infectious diseases...” This continues to be our primary mission moving forward into 2016 and the past 2015 year once again has proven the AHB to be recognized as one of the top-notch animal health agencies in the United States. With the leadership of State Veterinarian and Animal Health and Food Safety Services Director, Dr. Annette Jones, the Branch has responded to and managed a variety of challenging disease incidents. Outstanding professional and support staff have been the backbone of the AHB disease surveillance and response. Our invaluable partnership with the California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) Services Laboratory System, the United States Department of Agriculture/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services/Veterinary Services (USDA/APHIS/VS), industry organizations, academia, private practitioners and other state and federal agencies remain the solid foundation for essential collaborative working relationships. These relationships have been notably influential in protecting California’s multi-billion dollar livestock industry from epidemic and foreign animal disease.

As a Branch, our highest priority remains the continued and successful exclusion of foreign animal diseases from California’s livestock populations. In 2015, we witnessed the most devastating Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak in history in the United States and California in commercial poultry operations. This outbreak has spearheaded a massive HPAI Preparedness effort nationally and the California Department of Agriculture, Animal Health Branch is at the forefront of these efforts.

All AHB staff are working on Farm Readiness and Controlled Movement Teams, including but not limited to: Biosecurity, Epidemiology, Surveillance, Depopulation, Disposal, Cleaning and Disinfection, Product Movement and Permitting, Vaccination and Personal Protective Equipment. All teams are tasked to provide quick, improved and efficient response for the next HPAI incident. In addition, staff have been working diligently to bolster Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and refine Incident Management Teams to better manage a disease incident.

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As with most animal health agencies across the country, our Branch currently faces unprecedented challenges. State and federal budgets are in flux and alterations in availability of program funding are stimulating projections that may change the nature and focus of Branch activities. Increased attrition of experienced staff through retirement present challenges that we will overcome with increased cross training of available staff and expansion of recruitment, outreach and education. The experience, dedication and institutional knowledge will be greatly missed of retirees Dr. “Pete” Peterson (31 years), Dr. Jim Campbell (31 years), Bonnie Smith (27 years), Karen Jones (23 years) and Dr. Dan Rolfe (22 years). The untimely passing of Livestock Inspector Theresa Paulmann was a great loss to all AHB staff.

The continued dedication and commitment of personnel to the AHB mission is greatly appreciated and will ensure that emerging issues related to animal health, animal care, emergency management, food and agriculture security, production food safety and public health and safety are appropriately met. I continue to be proud to serve with so many competent colleagues and staff. As we move into 2016, the AHB is committed to continue protecting California’s agriculture as one of the most successful and productive in the world.

### CDFA/ AHB meets with the North Valley Poultry Task Force

by Rita Borgman, Program Manager

As part of the Animal Health Branch (AHB) ongoing preparedness efforts, Farm Readiness Teams were created, in early summer, to manage the Branch’s three initiatives: preparing producers and other susceptible industries, preparing regulatory responders and monitoring disease detections. The teams are comprised of both California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and United States Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services (USDA/VS) subject matter experts to plan for, respond to and recover from an animal disease outbreak. While all three initiative efforts are ongoing, one of the highlights this quarter was sharing farm readiness with the North Valley Task Force (NVTF) at the December 2nd California Poultry Federation meeting.

The NVTF is comprised of industry representatives from different commercial poultry production segments including broilers, layers, turkeys, waterfowl and specialty markets. The group also includes representatives from CDFA, USDA, California Animal Health Food Safety (CAHFS) Laboratory and county agricultural commissioners. The Task Force started as a statewide North/South Valley Task Force in 2003 during the Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) outbreak in southern California. Since the eradication of END, the task force has remained active to deal with avian disease issues. They meet annually to review international avian influenza outbreaks, national outbreaks, and state surveillance, learn CAHFS lab updates and any other topic relevant to LPAI and HPAI. The task force shares information between all industry segments and keep lines of communication open along with updated disease information in order to help protect the state’s commercial poultry industry from serious threats of a foreign animal disease.

Dr. Annette Jones, State Veterinarian, began CDFA’s presentation by providing general comments regarding the current status of the global avian disease situation, together with an update on the State’s wild bird surveillance efforts. Farm readiness team leaders provided team reports regarding each of their team’s efforts as follows:

- **Biosecurity** – The team is working with producers and the industry to identify ways to enhance on-farm biosecurity and mitigate risks to help provide even better protection against the virus. The commercial biosecurity risk assessment document is being amended to include permitting requirements and a backyard poultry specific document is being produced.
• **Permitting/Safe Food Supply** – The team has been working on Secure Food Supply documents over the last couple of years; much progress had been made on the Secure Milk Supply documents, however, with the Avian Influenza threat, this team’s concentration has shifted to working on Secure Egg Supply, and Secure Live Poultry Supply. Using National Guidelines, the team has worked to develop a CA version of the document(s). On-farm versions are being created for the farm, processors and haulers. The goal for these documents is business continuity, as much as possible, during an outbreak without spreading the disease. All movements into, out of, and within a control area would require a permit issued prior to movement. Permits will only be issued to premises that are following a Secure Food Supply plan.

• **Depopulation** - The team is working on overall preparedness efforts by developing depopulation supply lists by AHB Districts, ensuring that both CO2 and other depopulation supply vendors are identified, including their supply inventory and its availability. Other tasks include working on exploring the different depopulation methods and working on enhancing the capability to quickly identify the flock’s size, age of birds and the various species in order to gain efficiencies to quickly meet the depopulation timelines.

• **Disposal** - The team has been reviewing disposal options available and developing plans based on the most effective and practical disposal methods.

• **Cleaning and Disinfection** - The team is planning for C&D in advance of a disease detection to ensure appropriate disinfectants are identified and approved for use against the avian influenza virus in a farm setting. In addition, the team is developing protocols and procedures and evaluating new technologies that may be employed in future outbreaks.

• **Surveillance** - The United States has the strongest AI surveillance program in the world; CDFA in collaboration with the USDA are actively looking for the disease in commercial poultry operations, live bird markets and in migratory wild bird populations; this is an ongoing effort.

• **Epidemiology/Premises Validation** – The team objectives include obtaining current information/data validation by providing a primary and secondary emergency point of management contact for all poultry premises and updating basic data that will help facilitate CDFA’s preparedness for a response to an avian disease outbreak.

• **Outreach** – The team is working on updating avian influenza fact sheets and web pages, as well as establishing e-mail distribution groups in order to send targeted information in a more efficient, effective mode. Over 90,000 “CDFA Avian Health 2016 Calendars”, which include disease information and important contact numbers, have been distributed to premises all across the State (e.g. feed stores, pet stores, animal shelters, animal control offices, veterinary clinics, live bird markets, swap meets, etc.)

• **Incident Management** – This team is working on the overall incident management preparedness and at the meeting shared a fact sheet informing industry about their role, as an agency representative before, during and after an avian incident. The CDFA, AHB uses the Incident Command System (ICS) when responding to animal disease outbreaks to establish command and control and to coordinate the use of resources and personnel in the most effective and efficient manner. Blended CDFA/USDA Incident Management teams are currently going through ICS refresher training courses.

In addition to the Farm Readiness team reports, USDA shared information regarding indemnity and company contracts for cleaning and disinfection. During an animal disease outbreak, indemnity may be offered to the producer to reimburse their loss when their animals are euthanized to mitigate human health threat and prevent spread of the disease. In addition, when disease is detected on a producer’s premises, the producer and their on-farm staff may perform response related activities that may be eligible for reimbursement. The USDA indemnity specialist provided an overview of the indemnity/reimbursement process and encouraged producers and sub-contractors to register with the Federal Government as an approved vendor and obtain a Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) number. The DUNS number helps speed the
process of indemnity or any reimbursements for response related activities.

There has been much progress in each of the farm readiness initiative areas. CDFA/USDA blended teams will continue their planning and preparedness efforts this year, and beyond, to ensure that plans are developed and exercised, together with making sure that stakeholders who will be involved in a future HPAI outbreak know their roles and responsibilities.

For more information, visit the CDFA website at: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/Avian_Influenza.html

Other resources:
The CA Poultry Federation website, shares presentation slides regarding the farm readiness status at: http://cpif.org/cdfa-animal-health

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Update on Wild Bird Surveillance for Avian Influenza
By Felicia De La Torre, Research Scientist I
CDFA - Animal Health Branch
&
Rebecca L. Mihalco, Wildlife Disease Biologist
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services

The USDA is working with its partners to actively look for the disease in commercial poultry operations, live bird markets and migratory wild bird populations. No HPAI has been identified in any U.S. commercial or backyard poultry since June 17, 2015. As part of the wild bird surveillance effort, APHIS and its wildlife agency partners will be sampling more than 40,000 wild birds between July 1, 2015 and July 1, 2016 – with more than 24,000 samples already tested. Samples are being collected from both hunter-harvested birds and from wild bird mortalities. The State’s wild bird surveillance program, conducted by USDA Wildlife Services in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, continues to monitor for avian influenza—specifically highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and H5/H7 serotypes.

To date, in California, biologists have collected 240 live bird samples and over 850 hunter harvested samples in Northern California; close to 600 hunter harvested samples in Central California; and almost 200 hunter harvested samples in Southern California. More hunter harvest sampling is planned for the waterfowl hunt season which will go through the winter of 2015/2016. The California Department of Food and Agriculture monitors this wildlife surveillance for early warning signs. Positive HPAI or low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) findings in wild bird populations may create increased risk to domestic poultry in surrounding areas and enhanced appropriate targeted communications would begin with commercial and backyard producers. Preliminary results indicate that no HPAI has been found in these samples.
Vesicular Stomatitis

The 2015 Vesicular Stomatitis, New Jersey serotype, outbreak in the United States began April 29, 2015. To date, a total of 819 VS-affected premises have been confirmed or suspected in eight (8) U.S. states; Arizona (36 premises in 3 counties), Colorado (437 premises in 35 counties), Nebraska (38 premises in 10 counties), New Mexico (52 premises in 13 counties), South Dakota (50 premises in 7 counties), Texas (4 premises in 4 counties), Utah (56 premises in 8 counties), and Wyoming (146 premises in 10 counties). Currently, there are thirteen (13) premises remaining under quarantine in three (3) states (Colorado, Nebraska, and Texas).

As of January 1, 2016, the Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) for all livestock entering California from the following states require a VS statement: Colorado, Nebraska, Texas, Utah and Wyoming. Although all quarantines have been released from Utah and Wyoming, California VS statement requirements are in place for thirty (30) days after the last VS quarantine is released.

Reminder VS statement verbiage is “I have examined all the animals identified on this certificate within 72 hours of shipment date and found them to be free from signs of Vesicular Stomatitis (VS). During the last thirty (30) days, these animals have not been exposed to VS nor located on a VS confirmed or a VS suspected premises.”

For more information visit: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/VS.html

Horse Show Drug Testing Goes Electronic

Historically, the California Equine Medication Monitoring Program (EMMP) has been a paper based system with field personnel completing a paper record of sample collection for each horse. The paper system required the hand drawing of horse markings and handwriting horse and owner details. In 2016, the field personnel will be using iPad mini tablets to capture the data electronically. The iPads will also capture photos of the selected horse and bar code numbers from the sample. Streamlining the system will ensure efficiency and accuracy of data. The information from the tablets will be uploaded into a database from which data analysis and reporting will be possible.

National Equine Diseases Forum

The first ever National Equine Disease Forum co-hosted by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture and the U.S. Animal Health Association will take place on January 19-21, 2016 in Denver, Colorado. (http://animalagriculture.org/equineforum) There have been many equine disease challenges facing the industry and current disease control, whether on-farm measures for endemic diseases or the historic regulatory disease control measures, are no longer adequate.

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The goal of the forum is for equine stakeholders to share ideas related to equine disease control and prevention. Some of the speakers at the forum include Pat Parelli, natural horsemanship clinician and equine veterinarians Dr. Peter Timoney, Gluck Equine Research Center, Dr. Nicola Pusterla, University of California at Davis and Dr. Josie Traub Dargatz, Colorado State University. Most importantly, the forum has been specifically designed with discussion sessions to allow equine stakeholders an opportunity to share their ideas, concerns, and examples of successes and failures in past disease outbreaks.

Attendees will hear about the lessons learned from the recent Equine Herpesvirus-1 outbreaks and will review and discuss the recently published EHV-1 Incident Guidance Document for handling future outbreaks. Additionally, one of the diseases to be discussed is Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA). The USDA has recently published a paper on the findings of the EIA discussion group which will be the focus of EIA forum discussions. USDA will be soliciting comments regarding the future direction of the EIA program. If you are interested in attending, register and book your hotel now, before it’s too late. Register online at www.animalagriculture.org/equineforum. Additionally, attendees have the option to visit the National Western Stock Show on Wednesday evening, January 20th. The meeting will be held at the Double Tree Hotel in Denver and bookings can be made on the Forum website.

Bovine Tuberculosis and Brucellosis Update
By Anita Edmondson, BVMS, MPVM, MRCVS, Bovine Lead

On December 16, 2015, the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) proposed updates to its bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis program. The changes should better suit current needs, while continuing to protect against these diseases. APHIS is seeking public comments on this proposal: the proposed rule is available at http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS_FRDOC_0001-1862 and comments will be accepted through March 15, 2016.

Submitting Samples
Please remember to include all official animal identification when submitting samples to the CAHFS laboratory for official tests.

USAHA Meeting
The 119th US Animal Health Association Annual Meeting took place October 22-28 in Providence, Rhode Island. Animal health issues, research and information in disease eradication and control were discussed with federal and state animal health officials, industry representatives, diagnosticians and other leaders in animal agriculture. Presentations from those and prior year’s meetings are available for viewing online at http://www.usaha.org/Committees.aspx

Antibiotic Residues
Just a reminder, this is the time of year processors typically report increased numbers of antibiotic residues in milk. Rain and cold weather can result in an increase in the number of animals requiring treatment and an increased risk of antibiotic residues in milk.

Antibiotic residues are typically a result of record keeping errors. Positive antibiotic residue tests in milk can result in regulatory investigations and the potential for lost revenue. Please remind your producers of the importance of good record keeping and prudent use of antibiotics to assure a wholesome product is being provided and to avoid the difficulties associated with a residue investigation.
Annual Update of the California (CDFA) Reportable Conditions List
by Dennis Wilson DVM, MPVM, PhD., Outreach and Education Liaison

The California Reportable Conditions List has been reviewed and updated. The 2016 version has now been posted on our website in several locations. A direct link to the list: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/CA_Reportable_Disease_List_Poster.pdf

A link to our site (Animal Health Branch) that allows you to find the list and other pertinent information: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/Index.html

Note that the electronic pdf file has been designed to print easily on 11 x 17 paper if your printer handles this size and otherwise can be sized to 8 x 11. Annually, we review the World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE) listing as well as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) listing to identify International and U.S. changes. Furthermore, we work with State subject matter experts to determine if there are State specific concerns that need to be addressed. A key change this year concerns Seneca Valley Virus, AKA Senecavirus A. Because its presentation in swine is very similar to Foot and Mouth (FMD), it is now listed as an Emergency Condition. This move was done to rule out FMD quickly. For the rest of the changes please refer to the listing below.

Removed
• Avian strains of tuberculosis detected in livestock (was under Monitored Conditions)
• Leptospirosis (was under Multiple Species-Monitored Conditions)

Added:
• Akabane was combined with Schmallenberg (Emergency Conditions)
• Melioidosis was added under equine (Emergency Conditions)
• Erysipelas was added under swine (Monitored Conditions)
• To broaden reporting, influenza was added to Monitored Conditions/Multiple Species (influenza in species other than poultry)

Reclassified:
• Hemorrhagic Diseases are now under Monitored Conditions/Multiple Species
• Seneca Valley was moved to Emergency Conditions and renamed Senecavirus A
• Glanders was removed from Emergency Conditions/Multiple Species but remains under Equine

Additional Changes:
• With the exception of a couple of diseases (such as FMD), if a disease is of concern under Multiple Species, duplications of the disease were removed under specific species.
• Where the primary concern for the disease is in two species, the disease remains under both.
• Under Emergency Conditions/Multiple Species; change the wording "unexplained mortality or diseased animals" to "unexplained high mortality or diseased animals".
• Regarding reporting structure of swine coronaviruses, an exclusion was added for Transmissible Gastroenteritis (TGE) in Regulatory Conditions and TGE was left in Monitored Conditions.
Senecavirus A, commonly known as Seneca Valley virus (SVV), belongs to the same family (Picornaviridae) as Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD). SVV has been identified in U.S. swine since the 1980s and is occasionally implicated in sporadic outbreaks of idiopathic vesicular disease. Recently, SVV has been associated with clinical signs and gross lesions that are indistinguishable from vesicular foreign animal diseases (FADs) including FMD, vesicular stomatitis (VS), and swine vesicular disease (SVD); making rapid response and differential diagnosis imperative. The disease has also been reported in Canada, Australia, Italy, New Zealand and, most recently, in Brazil.

Since this virus mimics lesions of vesicular diseases in pigs, SVV has been recently added to the California “List of Reportable Conditions for Animals and Animal Products” in the Emergency Conditions column. All cases of vesicular disease must be reported immediately to CDFA/USDA to ensure rapid detection of catastrophic diseases such as FMD.

In October 2015, SVV was detected as the cause of snout vesicles on four pigs in a group of 180 out-of-state market hogs at a federally inspected slaughter facility in California. CDFA's Animal Health Branch conducted a FAD investigation and samples were tested at the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory for FMD the same day. Further testing completed by the USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratory confirmed SVV. SVV has also been seen in other states in 2015, initiating numerous FAD investigations nationally. The exact cause of lesions and disease is still being investigated. In some cases, swine herds approach 80 percent morbidity, with clinical signs including snout and coronary band vesicular lesions. Often animals are reported to be afebrile and are bright, alert, and responsive. Mortality in pre-weaned pigs has also been reported.

Cases presenting similarly to FMD, VS or SVD must be treated as such until FADs can be ruled out necessitating the following activities:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herd Veterinarian</th>
<th>Producer</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Intensive observation of animals for gross lesions and clinical signs</td>
<td>• Do not move animals which are ill, exhibiting clinical signs or active lesions</td>
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<td>• Upon encountering a suspect case, the veterinarian should:</td>
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<td>• Stay at the site and enhance biosecurity practices</td>
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<td>• Report to CDFA/USDA and follow instructions</td>
<td>• If possible, segregate/isolate affected animals on the site</td>
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<td>• Document movements leading up to and immediately surrounding the onset of clinical signs (as the information may be useful on disease analysis or for a FAD investigation)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cooperate with sample collection and submission as part of a FAD investigation under the direction of CDFA/USDA</td>
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Update information on swine emerging diseases is available from the Swine Health Information Center at http://www.swinehealth.org/emerging-disease-information/ or http://vetmed.iastate.edu/diagnostic-lab
The State Hiring Process…or…. How to Get a State Job
by Linda Fong, Agricultural Program Supervisor

Getting a job with the State of California requires doing a fair amount of homework, lots of patience and persistence. Here is a 3-step process that should help to get you on the right road.

Step 1 – Obtain the Right Information
Research State exams, open bulletins, and employment resources on the following websites:
• CalHR: http://www.calhr.ca.gov/Pages/home.aspx
• Free Lunchtime Seminars on “The State Civil Service Hiring Process” and “Limited Examination and Appointment Process (LEAP)”: https://jobs.ca.gov/Job/LunchSeminars
• Video Tutorial: http://www.calhr.ca.gov/Pages/job-seekers-video-tutorials.aspx

Step 2 – Apply and Prepare for an Examination
• To begin the application process, create your profile with CalHR
• Create an examination/employment application (STD. 678) and search for exam announcements/bulletins
• Exam announcements provide vital information including:
  Position description, knowledge and abilities, minimum qualifications, salary, final filing date (if exam is not continuous), testing date and locations
• Exams are not always given continuously so check back often
• Exams are given in various formats such as written, oral test/interview, or an education and experience questionnaire
• Some exams may offer a study guide. If unavailable, read the knowledge, skills, and abilities on the bulletin for a better understanding of what to expect and what is expected on the exam
• Take as many exams as qualifications allow and continue to monitor personnel list eligibility expiration

Step 3 – Employment Eligibility List and Applying for Job Vacancies
• Exam results are either calculated immediately or will be sent after Human Resources has scored the exam
• Test results/individual ranking can be found under the “My Profile Tab” on Careers in California Government webpage
• Individuals who have successfully passed the exam are placed on an eligibility list
• The top three ranks and veterans are reachable and eligible for employment first
• Once the top three ranks have been cleared, the subsequent ranks become reachable. For example, a candidate in Rank 4 on the Office Technician list will become reachable when a qualified candidate was not selected from the top three ranks and so on.
• When applying for vacancies, send a COMPLETE application package. A completed employment application (STD. 678) is the minimum requirement. Additional recommended documentation includes:
  • Cover letter
  • Résumé
  • Exam results
  • Transcripts (unofficial typically okay)
  • Typing certificate (if required)
  • Any other documentation the job announcement requests
  • Call a job vacancy posting contact if you have questions

Bottom line - research, apply for the exam, score in the top ranks, and then apply for vacancies that you’re list eligible for. This process takes time, but remember, working for the State of California is your goal, and it’s worth it!
Dr. Dennis Wilson came to CDFA, Animal Health Branch in January 1997 as a Field Veterinary Medical Officer in the Fresno (now Tulare) District. Previous to CDFA, he had worked for USDA-ARS, a private research firm, and U.C. Davis. Dr. Wilson has served in a number of capacities during his career with CFDA from being a field veterinarian, to part of the Branch’s pre-harvest food safety team, to involvement in emergency response planning. He is also currently the Branch’s liaison to the University of California (Davis) and Western University of Health Sciences (Pomona) Veterinary Schools.

Dr. Wilson had difficulty finding the door out of U.C. Davis as he stayed there long enough to earn a Bachelor’s in Genetics, a D.V.M., M.P.V.M and PhD. During his time at Animal Health Branch, he has participated in a number of activities and challenges. He was one of many AHB staff that responded to Exotic Newcastle in 2002-2003, melamine toxicosis in swine in 2006, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in 2012 and the recent Avian Influenza outbreaks. In 1997, a number of dairy cows died in Kings County due to organophosphate toxicity and were subsequently incinerated on-site. It was during that event that Dr. Wilson became Disposal Subject Matter Expert - a role he still holds today. When not at work, he obsesses over baseball and California history.

After graduating from Colorado State School of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Steve Cervantes moved to California and joined Mill Creek Veterinary Services, a 100% dairy practice in Visalia. He became a partner after two years and continued practicing for another eleven years with a primary focus on reproduction, milk quality and overall herd health. Dr. Cervantes has been happily married to his wife Helen for 32 years. Their son Gabriel teaches biology and computer science and their daughter Sarah is finishing a Master’s degree in social work. Steve enjoys being in the outdoors spending much of his off time spearfishing, cycling and backpacking. Dr. Cervantes joined the AHB in April of 2014 and was assigned to the Tulare district office. He has enjoyed his time with CDFA thus far and truly believes in our mission. Steve will be transferring to the Redding District in 2016 and looks forward to many more years of service.
## Contact Information

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- **Milk and Dairy Food Safety**
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- **Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety**
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