

Mission Statement

The Animal Health Branch 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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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Animal Health Branch Newsletter

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Virulent Newcastle Disease Detected in Southern California

Virulent Newcastle disease (vND), formerly known as exotic Newcastle disease, is a serious, highly contagious viral disease that can affect poultry and other birds. In May 2018, vND was detected in backyard birds in Southern California. This is the first case of vND in the U.S. since 2003.

Animal Health: vND may cause high rates of sickness and death in susceptible birds, and infected birds shed the virus in respiratory discharges and feces. Chickens are highly susceptible, but the disease can also affect turkeys, ducks, geese, psittacine birds (e.g. parrots), and various others.

Some birds may be infected and spread disease without showing any signs. After vND is introduced into domestic poultry, spread occurs by bird-to-bird contact or through contact with contaminated people, feed or equipment. Other types of Newcastle disease, known as lentogenic and mesogenic, are less virulent and may cause mild or no symptoms.



There is no effective cure for vND. It is important that all commercial and non-commercial poultry owners maintain effective barriers to mitigate the risk of vND. Biosecurity tips for commercial poultry owners can be found [here](#). For Backyard and non-commercial poultry owners, biosecurity tips can be found [here](#).

Clinical signs may include: swelling of area around the eyes and neck, increased fluid from the beak and nasal areas, coughing and sneezing, twisting of the neck and head, greenish watery diarrhea, loss of appetite, drop in production and sudden death.

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Virulent Newcastle Disease Detected in Southern California (continued)

Public Health: In rare cases, people exposed to infected birds may get eye inflammation or mild flu-like symptoms. These signs generally resolve without treatment; however, medical care should be sought if symptoms persist. Infection is prevented by using standard hygiene and personal protective equipment.

Virulent Newcastle disease is not a food safety concern. No human cases of Newcastle disease have ever occurred from eating poultry products. Properly cooked poultry products are safe to eat.

Ongoing disease outbreak in Southern California:

On May 13, 2018, a backyard exhibition bird owner brought two sick birds to a California veterinary clinic for treatment, and an additional two birds the following day. All four birds displayed dyspnea, lethargy and inappetence, and died at the clinic on May 15, 2018. Samples from the birds were submitted to the California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) Laboratory by the private practitioner, and tested positive for vND virus. Results were confirmed by the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) for vND in backyard exhibition birds on May 17, 2018. On May 18, 2018, CDFA and USDA issued press releases notifying the public of the disease.

An Incident Command Post was established in Southern California, and CDFA, in coordination with USDA APHIS, initiated an incident command response. Initial investigation and sampling focused on the residence of the owner of the birds where there were several pet birds, and the veterinary clinic that diagnosed the birds to ensure disease had not spread to exposed birds. Survey and outreach teams were dispatched to the area surrounding the two premises in Los Angeles County, as well as to feed stores and known backyard exhibition bird premises. However, the origin of the index affected birds remains unidentified.

On May 22, 2018, the incident received two sick calls reporting high mortality in backyard birds in San Bernardino County. One of the premises tested positive for vND virus at CAHFS Davis laboratory, and was confirmed by NVSL – the virus segment was 100% similar to the index case.

Through active surveillance visits, sick bird calls, outreach, and epidemiological links, incident personnel continue to identify infected, exposed and contact premises. The source of virus is unknown. The outbreak is currently limited to backyard birds in urban/suburban areas within city limits. **No commercial poultry premises are currently involved.**

Response statistics as of July 6, 2018:

- Over 1,000 backyard premises involved and quarantined, including infected and dangerous contact premises, premises with backyard birds identified by survey and outreach teams, and sick bird call follow ups.
- Nearly 65,000 premises visited for observational surveillance and outreach.
- Thirty-nine (39) infected premises confirmed over the course of the incident. All involved premises have been within three (3) counties (Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino); only the veterinary clinic that diagnosed the index cases and the owner's residence were in Los Angeles County.
- Six (6) Control Areas established in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. Control areas and surveillance zones are established around infected premises. Premises with birds on-site in the Control Areas are being quarantined, and some premises in the Surveillance Zones are quarantined according to disease risk.
- Over 400 responders deployed over course of incident and supporting virtually.

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Virulent Newcastle Disease Detected in Southern California (continued)

Protecting your birds: Biosecurity is key to preventing introduction and spread of vND. Some precautions bird owners can take include:

- Use dedicated clothing and footwear, or wear disposable coveralls and booties when visiting birds
- Use foot baths for the bottoms of shoes or plastic booties at entry/exit of poultry enclosures or areas
- Practice good hygiene for your hands and disinfect equipment
- Keep wild birds from entering poultry enclosures
- If you have dead birds, double bag the carcasses in plastic garbage bags to prevent spread and contamination

- Avoid gatherings where poultry are present; if you are exposed, change clothes and footwear, disinfect items, and wash your car
- Avoid sharing or borrowing equipment with other poultry owners
- Avoid moving your birds or purchasing new additions unless they are from an NPIP certified seller
- DO NOT dump bird carcasses on the roadside or other exposed locations

Vaccination: Vaccinating birds can reduce viral shedding and severity of illness or death, but cannot prevent infection – *good biosecurity and management is the best way to protect your birds from infectious disease*. If choosing to vaccinate, work with your veterinarian and use a product licensed in the U.S. (such as Lasota or B1), which can be purchased at some feed stores or online. It is important to follow label instructions for the vaccine to be effective.

CAHFS laboratory offers diagnostic services for all avian species, as well as specialized necropsy examinations for birds from backyard flocks (chickens, turkeys, squabs, water fowl of less than 1,000 birds in the flock) – up to two birds may be examined for \$20. More information can be found on their [submission form](#).

It is important to stay vigilant and report sick birds or unusual deaths through California's sick bird hotline at **866-922-2473**.



For Newcastle disease, oropharyngeal swabs and/or sick/dead birds are preferred samples for diagnosis. Some additional precautions are recommended for submissions to the CAHFS San Bernardino laboratory and can be found [here](#).

More information can be found at:

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/Newcastle_Disease_Info.html

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/vnd>

http://ucanr.edu/sites/poultry/Virulent_Newcastle_Disease_Outbreak_Information_and_Resources/

Equine Health Program Updates

By Katie Flynn, BVMS, MRCVS

Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy Case

On June 27, 2018 a 15-year-old Pony mare originating from a San Mateo County facility, displaying neurologic signs was confirmed positive for Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy. An additional horse originating from the same property, a 24-year-old Tennessee Walking Horse mare, displaying a fever, tested positive for Equine Herpes Virus-1. Both mares were isolated, placed under quarantine and enhanced biosecurity measures were implemented. To date, no additional cases have been identified. For the latest information on EHM cases confirmed in California visit.

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/equine_herpes_virus.html

West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus (WNV) continues to be a cause of mosquito-borne neurologic illness and death among humans and horses in California. Timely and accurate reporting of equine suspect WNV cases to local animal health officials by private veterinarians is a valuable component of arbovirus disease surveillance and helps direct mosquito control efforts to prevent WNV infection in horses and humans.

In 2017, twenty-one (21) horses were confirmed positive for West Nile Virus. The positive horses were located in Contra Costa, Fresno, Glenn (2), Kern (2), Lassen (3), Los Angeles, Plumas, Riverside (4), Sacramento, San Diego, San Joaquin (2), Tehama and Tuolumne counties. Fifteen horses were unvaccinated and six horses had unknown vaccination status. Eight horses died or were euthanized and thirteen horses recovered.

CDFA encourages practitioners to work with their clients to ensure horses are current on WNV vaccination. Your assistance in protecting the health of California's equine population is appreciated.

For more information on WNV visit the California WNV website at www.westnile.ca.gov and the CDFA WNV website at: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/wnv_info.html

USDA Accreditation Reminder

USDA accreditation is required for performing any regulatory functions including issuance of certificate of veterinarian inspection. Accreditation must be renewed every three years. Contact National Veterinary Accreditation Program Coordinator, Todd Carnes at 916- 854-3903 or Todd.D.Carnes@aphis.usda.gov to confirm your accreditation status.

Trichomonosis Year Reminder

By Alyssa Louie, DVM, MPVM

The end of the current “trichomonosis year” is approaching! The 2018-19 trich year will begin **September 1, 2018**. The upcoming year’s California trichomonosis approved tag will be **blue**.

California trichomonosis approved veterinarians testing bulls starting September 1, 2018 will need to apply a blue trichomonosis approved ear tag. Bulls tested previously and bearing white or orange trichomonosis tags should have those tags removed and replaced with the appropriate trich year tag at time of testing.

Please plan accordingly with ordering current year tags through August 2018, as stock may be affected by the transition.

Trichomonosis approved tags are NOT official ID. The individual official ID of each bull tested must be recorded and accompany the sample to the laboratory.

California trichomonosis approved veterinarians may order trich approved tags by calling MWI Veterinary Supply Company at 1-800-824-3703. For more information, please visit: https://www.cdffa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/trichomonosis_info.html



Bulls tested **September 1, 2017** through **August 31, 2018**.

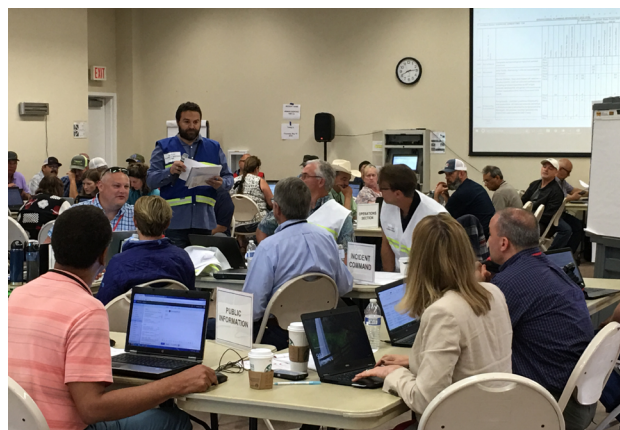


Bulls tested **September 1, 2018** through **August 31, 2019**.

Agriculture Response Management and Resources (ARMAR) Multi-State Foot and Mouth Disease Exercise

By Lisa Quiroz, Program Manager II, Emergency Programs

The California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Animal Health Branch (AHB) joined other State Animal Health Organizations and the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) as participants in a multi-state Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) exercise called Agriculture Response Management and Resources (ARMAR). The exercise, planned in coordination with the APHIS-VS National Training and Exercise Plan Workgroup, was conducted over three (3) days in May 2018. California was one of thirteen (13) participating states that activated an Incident Management Team (IMT) to work through the mock disease outbreak scenario.



The exercise scenario focused on a fictitious FMD outbreak which began with a single detection in Montana and spread throughout the U.S. to at least six (6) other states, including California. During the functional exercise, nearly 100 California personnel from nine (9) different agencies worked through complex disease control and containment decisions. To contain an FMD outbreak, regulatory officials would need to employ aggressive response strategies and mitigation tactics.

Major livestock and poultry disease outbreaks in California are managed jointly by CDFA/AHB and USDA/APHIS/VS under Unified Command, blending personnel resources from both agencies into an ad hoc organization using the Incident Command System. The ARMAR Exercise provided the California IMT the opportunity to activate this response organization and establish an Incident Command Post (ICP) in Modesto. In addition, both agencies activated remote incident support: a CDFA Department Operations Center in Sacramento and a USDA Incident Coordination Group in Riverdale, MD.

During the exercise, the California IMT was successfully able to: activate a highly functioning ICP, track and order resources, produce daily Situation Reports and Incident Action Plans, issue movement control orders, establish disease control boundaries, develop site-specific and regional biosecurity plans, develop a scenario-specific surveillance plan, conduct epidemiologic disease investigations, draft an epidemiology report, complete a request for vaccine, perform disease tracking, tracing, and data management.

Exercises like ARMAR allow CDFA/AHB to test emergency response plans, policies, and procedures. Evaluators documented capabilities and identified gaps throughout the exercise, which will help us to improve our plans and procedures and assist in prioritizing future preparedness activities. This cycle of planning, training, and exercising ensures AHB is constantly improving animal disease response capabilities.

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