CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Animal Health Branch Newsletter

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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 is Bovine TB Accredited-Free

Anita Edmondson, BVMS, MPVM, MRCVS

California regained its "Accredited-Free" status for bovine tuberculosis (TB) on August 8, 2016, thanks to the hard work of many private veterinarians, cattle producers and animal health officials at the state, federal, and local levels. The upgraded status is a result of several years of testing and biosecurity efforts following the detection of TB in eight dairy herds between 2008 and 2013; three herds in Fresno County in 2008, one herd in San Bernardino County in 2009, three herds in San Bernardino County in 2011, and one herd in Tulare County in 2013. These herds have all been declared free of disease, and over 1.4 million cattle in several hundred herds have been tested during this time. Accredited-Free status allows cattle to move to other states without the federal requirement of TB testing; state testing requirements may still be in effect.

The bovine TB program involves TB surveillance at slaughter plants and TB testing of live cattle. Private veterinarians are reminded about the importance of providing ample lead time when TB testing cattle moving out of state or for sales; regulatory personnel need time to clear caudal fold test (CFT) responders before the load can move, so don't plan to read the CFTs "with the cattle trucks idling in the driveway waiting to load".

2016 Equine West Nile Virus Cases

Katie Flynn, BVMS, MRCVS

So far in 2016, a total of nineteen (19) horses have been confirmed positive for West Nile virus (WNV). The positive horses are located in the following counties: Calaveras, Fresno (2), Merced, Riverside, Sacramento (3), San Diego, San Joaquin (6), Shasta, Sutter (2) and Ventura. Seventeen (17) of the positive horses were not current on their WNV vaccinations and two (2) horses had unknown vaccination status. Seven (7) of the nineteen (19) positive confirmed horses died or were euthanized.

CDFA continually monitors and investigates equine neurologic cases for the presence of WNV in California. For more information visit: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/wnv_info.html.

Foreign Animal Disease Investigations

July 1 - September 30, 2016

Alireza Javidmehr, DVM, MPVM, PhD

Animal health officials define an exotic or foreign animal disease (FAD) as an important transmissible livestock or poultry disease believed to be absent from the U.S. and its territories that has a potential significant health or economic impact. FADs are considered a threat to the U.S. when they significantly affect human health or animal production and when there is an appreciable cost associated with disease control and eradication efforts. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), Animal Health Branch (AHB) personnel work vigilantly with private veterinarians, producers and veterinary laboratories to identify, control, and eradicate these diseases. The AHB has conducted twenty-seven (27) FAD investigations so far in the 2016 calendar year, and sixteen (16) FAD investigations since July 2016.

Open Date	Disease	Species	Sample Type	Location of Animal (County)	Destination Lab*	NVSL Result
7/28/2016	Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV)	Bovine	Blood, Serum, Tissue	Kern	NVSL, CAHFS	Negative
8/9/2016	VSV	Equine	Blood, Oral Swab	San Diego	NVSL, CAHFS	Negative
8/5/2016	Schmallenburg Virus, Akabane	Bovine	Carcass	Tulare	NVSL, CAHFS	Negative
8/11/2016	FMD, Swine Vesicular Disease (SVD), Seneca Valley Virus (SVV)	Swine	Serum, Swab, Vesicle Fluid	Stanislaus	NVSL, CAHFS	Positive only for SVV
8/11/2016	FMD, Orf, Bluetongue (BT), Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF), Border Disease, Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD)	Ovine	Blood, Swab, Scab	Stanislaus	NVSL, CAHFS	Positive for Parapox (Orf)
8/15/2016	FMD, VSV	Bovine	Blood, Serum, Swab	Placer	NVSL, CAHFS	Negative
8/16/2016	VSV	Equine	Serum, Swab	Monterey	NVSL, CAHFS	Negative
8/16/2016	VSV, Piroplasmosis	Equine	Serum	Orange	NVSL, CAHFS	Positive for Piroplasmosis
8/26/2016	FMD, VSV, EHD, Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVD)	Bovine	Serum, Tissue, Scab, Swab	Ventura	NVSL, CAHFS	Positive for EHD and BVD
8/30/2016	VSV	Equine	Serum, Swab	Orange	NVSL, CAHFS	Negative
9/8/2016	Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease	Lagomorph	Liver	Sonoma	NVSL, CAHFS	Negative
9/16/2016	FMD, VSV, SVV	Swine	Serum, Swab	Stanislaus	NVSL, CAHFS	Positive for SVV
9/19/2016	FMD, VSV, SVV	Swine	Serum, Swab, Vesicle Fluid	Stanislaus	NVSL, CAHFS	Positive for SVV
9/22/2016	FMD, VSV, SVV	Swine	Serum, Swab	Stanislaus	NVSL, CAHFS	Negative
9/23/2016	FMD, VSV, MCF, BT, EHD	Bovine	Blood, Serum, Swab	Stanislaus	NVSL, CAHFS	Positive for EHD and BT
9/28/2016	FMD, VSV, MCF, EHD	Bovine	Blood, Serum, Swab	Stanislaus	NVSL, CAHFS	Negative

*NVSL – National Veterinary Services Laboratory, CAHFS – California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory

Interesting FAD Cases this Quarter

Alireza Javidmehr, DVM, MPVM, PhD

FAD investigations in swine have recently increased in California. AHB and USDA Veterinary Services (VS) personnel conducted one FAD investigation in swine in July 2016, and three more during September 2016. Seneca Valley virus (SVV), also known as Senecavirus A, was the cause of snout vesicles in two out of three investigations in September, and in July's investigation. All three positive cases were in out-of-state market hogs that arrived at a federally-inspected slaughter facility in California. As vesicular lesions can be caused by several diseases, including foot and mouth disease (FMD), foreign animal disease diagnosticians responded to these cases immediately by sending samples to the California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) Laboratory to test for FADs the same day. Further testing of the samples for other swine diseases such as African swine fever, classical swine fever, and SVV at USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) confirmed SVV. This disease had not been diagnosed in California before October 2015, but since then has initiated numerous FAD investigations in the state and nationally.

Also of particular interest among recent FAD investigations are two separate cases involving cattle. In both cases, cattle presented with hypersalivation, nasal mucosa sloughing and similar symptoms to FMD. Private practitioners immediately reported these cases to CDFA and USDA district offices as suspected FAD cases in August and September 2016. Samples were collected by FAD diagnosticians per protocol and were sent to the CAHFS laboratory and NVSL Plum Island. Although all sample results were negative for FMD and vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV), the CAHFS laboratory reported viremic infections with epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) virus in both cases. In addition, CAHFS reported one had co-infection with bluetongue virus and the other had co-infection with bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) virus. EHD, bluetongue and BVD infections are all classified under "Monitored Conditions' in the California List of Reportable Conditions for Animals and Animal Products and they should be reported to the CDFA AHB district offices.

Suspicious cases presenting similarly to FADs must be treated as such until FADs can be ruled out. It is important for private practitioners and producers to continue monitoring livestock for symptoms similar to those associated with FADs and immediately report suspect cases to CDFA/USDA animal health officials. The officials will work with the producer, practitioner and the laboratory to carry out a comprehensive disease investigation until FADs can be ruled out. Private practitioners and producers should become familiar with the reportable disease conditions and report signs of illness or mortality by calling the CDFA/USDA District Office in their area (see contact information on the last page).

Equine Piroplasmosis in the United States

Katie Flynn, BVMS, MRCVS

State and Federal Animal Health Officials continue to investigate equine piroplasmosis (EP) in the U.S. racing Quarter Horse population. Since October 2015, a total of fifty-five (55) racing Quarter Horses in the U.S. have been confirmed positive for *Theileria equi*. One of the positive horses was a three year old filly in California which originated in Wyoming. Most cases were asymptomatic at time of confirmation.

Epidemiologic investigations indicate the majority of the positive horses participated in Quarter Horse racing and had potential exposure to high risk practices such as sharing of needles and other medical equipment, or the use of contaminated blood products. Although difficult to verify, there is evidence suggesting some of the horses participated in unsanctioned racing.

The management options for EP positive horses are lifetime quarantine of the individual horse in a tick free environment, enrollment in a state-federal approved EP treatment program, or humane euthanasia.

Protecting California's equine industry from EP is critical. CDFA will continue to investigate to determine additional risk factors for disease in this population of horses. CDFA recommends the implementation of enhanced biosecurity practices in this population of horses and testing of any suspect cases. For additional information and outreach materials visit: https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/EquinePiroplasmosis.html.

Equine Identification Forum

Katie Flynn, BVMS, MRCVS

The U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) are hosting their second Equine Forum, January 17-18, 2017 in Denver, Colorado. This forum titled "Advancing ID, Technology & Electronic Health Records" will bring equine industry leaders together to discuss all aspects of equine identification and to identify solutions to protect the future of the equine industry in the U.S.

The forum will include presentations by subject matter experts and smaller group discussions on focused topics. The discussion groups will focus on equine identification and traceability challenges, and how to enhance communication and collaboration industry-wide at the local, state and national levels. Industry's input is critical for successful implementation of an equine identification and traceability system.

The goals of the forum are to establish consensus on the parameters of a national equine identification program, to provide recommendations for advancing equine identification technologies and electronic data capture methodologies, and to form an industry stakeholder group to develop a national equine identification and traceability plan. Advancing equine identification and traceability is essential for protecting the future health of the equine industry. For more information visit: http://www.animalagriculture.org/equineforum.

California Equine Health: Your Input is Needed on the Survey

Katie Flynn, BVMS, MRCVS

The department's ability to protect the health of California's equid population from diseases of regulatory importance is a concern. Based on the recent impact of equine disease outbreaks such as infectious anemia, equine herpesvirus-1, equine piroplasmosis, and contagious equine metritis, the department is considering a proposal to expand their equine health activities. The equine industry's perspective is critical in determining how to best advance the health of California's equid population. An industry survey is a first step to explore options to define, control and prevent equine diseases of regulatory importance. Your input is needed on the thirteen (13) question survey which should take between 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey can be found at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/629JV3V. For more information or questions regarding the survey contact Dr. Katie Flynn at kflynn@cdfa.ca.gov. Your time and feedback is appreciated.

Livestock Exposed to Toxic Substances: Monensin Toxicity

Maureen Lee-Dutra, DVM, MPVM; Anita Edmondson, BVMS, MPVM, MRCVS

Any suspicions of livestock being exposed to toxic substances that may be a public health, animal health, or food safety threat must be reported to the Animal Health Branch within 24 hours; any unexplained increase in the number of diseased animals or deaths must be similarly reported. The following is an example of a recent toxicity case.

When mortalities spiked in dairy heifers experiencing upper respiratory infections, one was submitted to the California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) laboratory for necropsy. Gross examination showed mild bronchopneumonia and evidence of prior pneumonia; on histology, myocardial necrosis (heart muscle damage) was noted. Substances that cause such findings in cattle include oleander poisoning and monensin toxicity.

Monensin is used in various livestock and poultry feeds as a coccidiostat and to improve feed efficiency. As with many medications, there is significant variability between species regarding potentially lethal concentrations. For monensin, the LD50 (the lethal dose, or amount of substance required to kill 50% of a test population) in cattle is 20-34 mg/kg. Poultry are more resistant to toxicity with an LD50 of 90-200 mg/kg. Horses are very sensitive to monensin with an LD50 of 2-3 mg/kg. Monensin toxicities are not uncommon: errors can occur at the feed mill, where concentrations in the bag can be higher than stated on the label, or on the farm, where mistakes can be made in the mixing of the supplement with other feedstuffs.

In this case, new bags of feed supplement had been fed to approximately 140 heifers located in three pens. Two days after introduction of the new batch of supplement, there were two fatalities. Deaths continued over the next few days and one of the heifers was submitted to the laboratory as described. With the myocardial necrosis findings, the monensin supplement was withdrawn from the ration and feed samples were submitted. Analysis of the feed revealed monensin concentrations 2-3 times higher than the labeled amount. A total of 62 heifers died over four weeks following the feeding of the monensin feed supplement.

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In this situation, replacement heifers were affected. However, when milk or meat producing animals are exposed, their products may also need to be evaluated for residues for consumer safety. In livestock toxicity cases the Animal Health Branch works in partnership with the private veterinarian, producer, the CAHFS laboratory, CDFA Feed, Fertilizer and Livestock Drug Regulatory Services, and CDFA Milk and Dairy Foods Safety Branch to fully define the cases and mitigate the animal and human health risks.

It is important to remember that occurrences of unexplained increase in morbidity or mortality in livestock, including suspect toxicoses, are reportable to the Animal Health Branch in your area within 24 hours of suspicion: Animal Health Branch veterinarians are on-call 7-days a week to respond to concerns (see contact numbers on the last page).

Other important contact numbers include:
CDFA Feed, Fertilizer and Livestock Drug Regulatory Services: (916) 900-5022
CDFA Milk and Dairy Food Safety Branch: (916) 900-5008

Lead Toxicity and its Effects on Animals and Animal Products

Steven Gallego, DVM; Anita Edmondson, BVMS, MPVM, MRCVS;
Alyssa Louie, DVM, MPVM

Poisoning by toxic chemicals such as lead can cause serious diseases in people, particularly children, and livestock. Lead is a potent neurotoxin affecting the brain, and it is present and in daily use on many farms. It also persists in the environment for many years.

Lead Sources
Discarded lead-acid batteries are the most common source of lead poisoning in ruminants; the lead and lead salts in batteries are readily eaten by livestock. There are many potential sources including contaminated feed or soil, lead paint, plumbing solder, lead shot, grease, discarded asphalt, and crankcase oil. Lead from these sources can be easily absorbed by animals, particularly when finely ground or exposed to acidic conditions, including silage. Urban soil, due to historical exposure to lead-based paint and industrial processes, may have higher lead levels than rural soil.

Cattle and poultry are most at risk of lead poisoning because they are inquisitive and commonly taste new finds. The risk of lead toxicity can also increase during drought. Hungry livestock may develop pica (consumption of nonfood items), particularly if concurrently suffering trace element or mineral deficiencies. Low pasture cover may increase the likelihood of livestock finding hazardous materials.

Symptoms
Often the first sign of lead poisoning is finding dead animals. When affected animals are observed, they show signs of central nervous system (CNS) damage – they may cease grazing, appear dull and unresponsive, walk aimlessly, or be blind. In some cases these symptoms are accompanied by muscle twitches, paralysis of the tongue, circling, and 'star-gazing'. Get immediate veterinary advice if your livestock show CNS signs; a rapid and accurate diagnosis is vital to preventing continuing losses.

Diagnosis
Diagnosis of lead poisoning is based on a history of access to lead and clinical signs. Postmortem examination can reveal lead particles in the reticulum of affected ruminants or within the crop of poultry. Elevated blood lead levels can be detected for weeks following abnormal lead intake. Diagnosis can be difficult when animals don't show signs of toxicity but have elevated blood levels.

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Treatment
There are no United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved treatments for food producing animals in the United States, and the outlook for any animal that has ingested a large amount of lead is poor. Supportive care, such as injections of thiamine hydrochloride (vitamin B1) or drenching with small amounts of magnesium sulfate (Epsom salts), may help reduce the severity and continued absorption in affected ruminants. Calcium-EDTA has been used for treatment in animals as well. Work closely with your veterinarian for treatment details.

Prevention
Secure or fence off areas with garbage, batteries, and farm equipment. Old batteries and any broken/spilled contents should be removed and taken to a recycling facility. Check new grazing areas for potential hazards before turning livestock out.

Testing eggs, backyard poultry, and the environment (dirt, poultry enclosures), particularly in urban areas, can help identify lead exposure or a source. Removing poultry from a contaminated environment, soil remediation (removing topsoil and adding new, uncontaminated soil), or increasing the calcium content in the chickens' diet (which decreases the absorption of ingested lead) may be options to prevent further exposure. As egg shells from exposed poultry likely contain lead, they should not be used for composting or refeeding to poultry.

Protecting Human Health
Meat and eggs containing elevated lead levels are not suitable for human consumption. Animals recovering from lead toxicity can have elevated lead levels for many months. Even when the source of lead is removed, lead can be released from bone deposits during normal calcium turnover and during calving or egg laying.

Along with strategies to remove sources of lead, periodic testing of eggs or live animals (whole blood samples) may be recommended before slaughter or consumption of animals exposed to lead. Testing for lead in eggs, blood, liver, and kidney can be done at the California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) Laboratory. For more information on eggs, check out: "A Question of Lead: Is it harmful to eat eggs from backyard chickens that have been exposed to lead?" (Poultry Science, January/February 2014. http://ucanr.edu/sites/poultry/files/234977.pdf).

Important Reminders on Our List of Reportable Conditions for Animals and Animal Products

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, has been exposed to, or may be transmitting or carrying any of the following conditions, must report that information to the Animal Health Branch (AHB) or USDA Veterinary Services (VS).

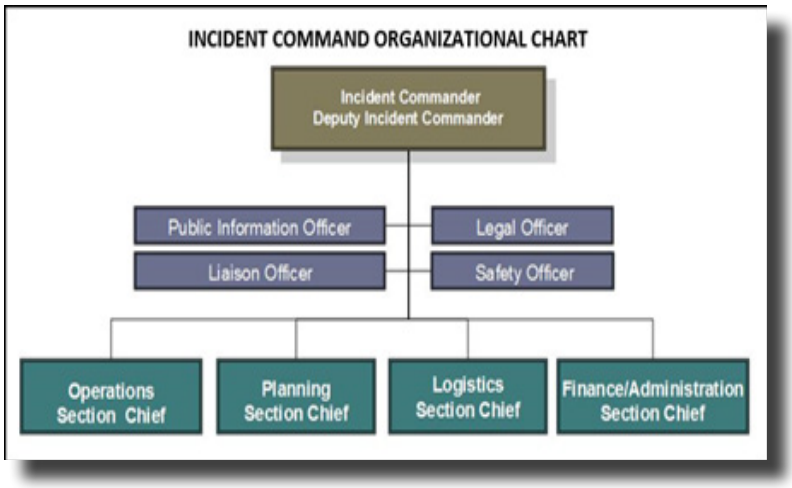
WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED? Any animal disease not known to exist in the United States, any disease for which a control program exists, or any unexplained increase in the number of diseased animals or deaths must be reported. Any conditions caused by exposure to toxic substances that have or may have the potential to be a public health, animal health, or food safety threat must be reported within 24 hours.

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/pdfs/CA_Reportable_Disease_List_Poster.pdf

Preparing for Foreign Animal Disease Outbreaks

Lisa Quiroz, Senior Emergency Services Corrdinator

Foreign animal disease (FAD) outbreaks can threaten animal and public health, the environment, animal agriculture, and the food supply. These outbreaks may also have significant impact on the economy, as they trigger international trade restrictions. For example, the 2014/2015 nationwide Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak was the largest animal disease response in U.S. history, with response costs nearing $1 billion and international trade and other secondary losses estimated at $8 billion. The CDFA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Veterinary Services share the responsibility to detect, report, and respond to emergency animal disease occurrences in California's domestic livestock and poultry populations. When an emergency animal disease outbreak occurs, the goal is to minimize the impact through early detection and quick, effective response – this is achieved by developing plans for prevention, detection, response, and recovery.



During a response to animal disease outbreaks, the CDFA and USDA enter into Unified Command, using the Incident Command System (ICS) to organize and track personnel and equipment resources, manage the incident by objectives, and maintain a scalable response structure to ensure a rapid ability to escalate the response to correspond with potential disease spread. Under this structure, a CDFA/USDA incident management team is deployed to coordinate the incident response, manage public messages, and take measures to control and eradicate the disease. Measures used to control and eradicate an FAD include surveillance and diagnostics, quarantine and movement control, biosecurity measures, epidemiological investigations, appraisal and compensation, depopulation of affected poultry, carcass disposal, and cleaning and disinfection.

CDFA is hosting a series of regional workshops, conducted in each of the four Animal Health Branch districts statewide, as part of a multi-year effort to enhance skills by exercising animal disease responders' ICS roles and responsibilities using a mock HPAI disease outbreak scenario. The workshops bring laboratory, county, industry and local stakeholders together with CDFA and USDA team members to define roles and practice decision-making, coordination, resource planning, and ordering processes. To date, three of the five planned workshops have been conducted in Modesto, Riverside, and Tulare, California. Participation in these workshops has allowed the incident management team and stakeholders to gain an understanding of how the ICS is used to manage a response to an animal disease outbreak, gain knowledge of position-specific roles and responsibilities, observe demonstrations of planning meetings, and complete incident documentation. Participant feedback from these workshops has been positive with over 80% of participants agreeing that following the workshop, they feel better prepared to utilize the skills that were exercised.

Contract Veterinarians: Shipping Price Change for ***Brucella abortus*** RB-51 Vaccine

Brucellosis vaccine must be ordered online at: https://apps4.cdfa.ca.gov/brucvacc/ using a valid credit or debit card for the payment system. The price of the *Brucella abortus* RB-51 vaccine for the 2016-17 fiscal year remains unchanged at:

5 dose vial	$4.70
25 dose vial	$21.00

This price reflects the amount charged to the State of California by the vaccine manufacturer, the cost of vaccination eartags, tattoo ink and equipment, calf vaccination forms and other program costs.

A shipping charge of $15.00 will be added to orders of less than $150.00 of vaccine. Please make an effort to place orders in a timely manner and obtain the standard shipping charges. As of **October 1, 2016**, overnight shipping requests will be charged at the following rates:

Cost of Vaccine Order to Veterinarian	Additional Overnight Shipping Charge
$0-$150	$50
>$150-$500	$100
>$500-$1,000	$150
>$1,000-$2,000	$200
>$2,000-$3,500	$250
>$3,500-$5,000	$325
>$5,000 and above	$400

Please print the statement provided by the software at the end of the ordering process for your records.

Contract Veterinarians: Brucellosis Vaccine Contract Renewals

The time to renew your brucellosis contract with CDFA is fast approaching. This contract is a requirement by the State to allow you to vaccinate heifers. Please make sure we have your updated contact information including mailing address and email address. Contract renewals will be sent out during the month of October. Contracts need to be signed and returned to CDFA Headquarters by December 31, 2016. For updates or questions please email Elizabeth.francia@cdfa.ca.gov.

Staff Biographies

Steven Gallego is a native Northern Californian and has been a Veterinarian General in the Redding District since the Spring of 2014. After completing his BSC at UC Davis, he dabbled in research at Stanford and UC San Francisco's medical schools before moving to Madison, WI for veterinary school. Four winters worth of snow shoveling convinced him to return West following spring thaw and graduation in 1996. For the next 17 years he practiced in Washington's Yakima Valley milk shed and later a solo cow practice in Orland, CA. As all good things must come to an end, the last dairy downturn presented an opportunity to leave practice and join CAHFS as the Dairy Food Safety Fellow in 2012. Throughout, it has been Steven's good fortune to be surrounded by capable and supportive people especially since returning to California. Solo practice was made tenable in large part because of people like Drs. Palmer and Poulos. Good fortune continued at CAHFS where invaluable relationships were established; he maintains those ties today through continued publishing and occasional teaching alongside Dr. Birgit Puschner and assistant to CDFA's Dr. Dennis Wilson. Most recently he has begun to prepare for board certification in toxicology (why not?) with help and support from his colleagues.

Steven's wife Kathy is a food safety specialist within the dairy and nut industries. Their son is a Cal graduate and machinist at UC Berkeley. Their daughter is an undergrad at UC Santa Cruz. Normally a private family shy of the paparazzi, the Gallegos have been spotted with more frequency out and about dining, travelling and enjoying their new empty nest status. They reside in Red Bluff working in their home's gardens, entertaining friends and family, or standing in the Sacramento River donating lures to the river's salmon gods.

Alisha Olmstead is the new Veterinarian-in-Charge of the Ontario District as of October 1, 2016. Dr. Olmstead grew up in Eastern Washington with her two brothers and father that own and operate Double Barrel Ranch. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Neuroscience at Washington State University prior to obtaining her veterinary degree at Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in the West Indies. She did an internship at Willamette Valley Equine Surgical and Medical Center, near Portland, Oregon; and was hired on as an associate with the practice, where she performed equine ambulatory veterinary services. Dr. Olmstead joined CDFA as a VMO in February of 2011. In her free time, she enjoys riding her horses and taking them on camping trips along with her boyfriend and two dogs.

Congratulations, Alisha, and thank you for providing this leadership in Ontario District!

Contact Information

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE

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and
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Dr. Annette Jones
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