



Role of the Animal Health Branch

The California legislature established the Office of the State Veterinarian in 1899 to “protect the health of all domestic animals in the state.” Today, the Animal Health Branch (AHB) is the State’s organized professional veterinary medical unit that focuses on protecting livestock populations, consumers, and the state’s economy from catastrophic animal diseases and other health or agricultural problems to help ensure availability of wholesome affordable food. The staff focuses on animal diseases and conditions that cannot be controlled on an individual animal or herd level, and require statewide coordinated resources. Changes in agriculture and public health have led to an evolution of diverse AHB functions, but the Branch mission remains the same.

Animal Health Branch Programs

To protect California livestock and poultry industries and to ensure safe animal products, AHB focuses on programs for management of livestock health and surveillance, animal disease traceability, animal disease emergency response, and equine medication monitoring. Laboratories providing diagnostic testing in support of the programs include the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratories (Davis, Turlock, Tulare, and San Bernardino), private diagnostic laboratories, and private practitioner testing services.

Livestock Health Management Programs

The Livestock Health Management Programs coordinate statewide activities to prevent, control, and eradicate specific diseases of livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, swine, equine, poultry) through cooperative industry-state-federal programs and animal movement controls. Branch staff coordinate disease surveillance programs for tuberculosis, brucellosis, scrapie, pseudorabies, trichomonosis, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, classical swine fever, equine, infectious anemia, and various avian diseases. Personnel also permit and monitor movements of livestock into the State each year to ensure animal entry requirements are met.



Animal Disease Emergency Programs

The Emergency Program focuses on planning activities and protocol development for emergency response to detection of high consequence Foreign and Emerging Animal Diseases, continuity of business for potentially impacted livestock industries, and recovery from disease incursions. Essential program elements include staff training, conducting exercises to assess protocols, identification of protocol and training gaps, and education of industry stakeholders.

Equine Medication Monitoring Program

The California horse industry sponsored legislation in 1971 to deter the misuse of drugs and medications in horses entered in public shows and sales in California. Branch staff coordinate a statewide testing program at public shows and sales to deter the use of drugs and medications that alter performance and behavior.

Veterinary Biologics and Commercial Blood Banks for Animals

AHB staff permit and monitor the use of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)-licensed veterinary biologics in the state, as well as license firms engaged in the production of animal blood and blood components for retail sale and distribution.



When to Contact the Animal Health Branch

A partnership between livestock and poultry producers, private veterinary practitioners, laboratories, and government agencies is essential to protect California livestock and poultry. Contact the staff in your local AHB District Office:

- To report incidents of increased morbidity or mortality in animals or toxic conditions likely to contaminate animals or animal products,
- To obtain information on the List of Reportable Conditions for Animals and Animal Products,
- To report tuberculosis caudal fold test responders, and/or
- To obtain information on:
 - ◊ Livestock entry requirements and health certificates
 - ◊ Official identification and how to get tags
 - ◊ Brucellosis vaccination contracts and supplies
 - ◊ Brucellosis and tuberculosis testing supplies and forms
 - ◊ Trichomonosis sample collection and testing
 - ◊ Veterinary accreditation

CDFA Animal Health Branch

Headquarters - (916) 900-5002

Redding District - (530) 225-2140

Modesto District - (209) 491-9350

Tulare District - (559) 685-3500

Ontario District - (909) 947-4462

USDA-APHIS-VS (916) 854-3950 or (877) 741-3690

For more information, please visit our webpage: www.cdfa.ca.gov/ah

