

Washington State



Department of Agriculture

ANIMAL HEALTH NEWS

ANIMAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER THIRD ISSUE 2008

If you have questions or comments about this letter or its contents feel free to contact Dr. Paul Kohrs at 360-902-1835 or the permit desk at 360-902-1878. Your input is greatly appreciated. If you have an item to include in a future newsletter, email Dr. Paul Kohrs at pkohrs@agr.wa.gov.

NEWS FROM OTHER STATES

TB continues to be in the news throughout the country as states battle this insidious pathogen that continues to elude eradication efforts. New Mexico after several years as a split state has now had the state downgraded to MAA from free. This has triggered increased testing for animals originating from New Mexico as we enhance our efforts to protect our livestock industry. California as well has lost its free status as predicted in the last animal health newsletter. Minnesota has gained split state status in their efforts to lift some of the testing burden on their industry. The majority of the state is MAA with a small TB management zone that is MA. When WSDA started its rule making process in 2007, the industry asked us not to recognize the split state status of TB affected states. Therefore, we do not recognize these zones and treat the entire state at the lowest classification with subsequent testing restrictions. During the last part of the second quarter and third quarter, we cooperated with USDA personnel and completed the traces of cattle that had been imported into the state from California.

Montana, as mentioned in the second quarter newsletter, did lose its Brucellosis Free status. There has been discussion about testing buffer zones in Yellowstone Park and creating similar zones that exist for TB. This is in the discussion stages and I am sure it will be a much debated topic before regulations are in place. Wyoming has found a second Brucellosis infected herd and very likely will be downgraded from Free to A. The department has placed testing requirements on cattle from these states as well.

After two decades of absence, Florida has been dealing with an outbreak of Equine Piroplasmiasis (EP). The infected horses were first discovered on August 13th. At the height of the outbreak, there were 28 premises under quarantine in seven counties. The outbreak yielded 18 positive horses, 13 of which have been euthanized or sent to labs for research on the disease. As of this writing, there is one premise left with five of the infected horses. The strain of EP is *B. equi* and none of the animals were treated. The epidemiological investigation is pointing to management practices that have led to the spread of the disease after two infected horses were illegally imported earlier from Mexico. The disease has been confined to the Quarterhorse "brush track" racing industry which is not sanctioned and has some questionable origins and practices associated with it.

WSDA's experience with the disease has indicated that the disease is probably not curable. The four infected horses we have in the state have all been treated at least three times with high doses of Imidacarb and still show evidence of infection. Therefore, we require quarantine and a 60 day retest on horses that have spent any time in Florida.

This event has also caused Canada to require testing on horses that have been in Florida or portions of the state where there have been positive premises. For a short time, until the Canadian authorities clarified their regulation, Washington was considered a state with an EP quarantined premise and would have had restrictions placed on it. This obviously would have had a profound impact on the industry, but they sent out another memo clarifying the first one and the horse movements were allowed to continue.

Our close neighbor, Idaho, had the misfortune of dealing with a low path AI outbreak in a game farm near Caldwell in August and September. The premises was home to 30,000 birds of various game species and several feral chickens. After considerable negotiations with the USDA for indemnity for the birds, the birds were euthanized the third week of September with assistance from four WSDA staff members. Foam and CO₂ were used in a majority of the pens, so the experience was very valuable for the staff members that participated. Seeing the Incident Command Structure in

place and watching it work (or not work) was valuable training for our staff if we are ever faced with a similar situation in Washington State. It was also good to nurture our relationship with a neighboring state should we ever need to call on them for assistance.

IN STATE NEWS

As always, rulemaking is part of the regulatory activities of the department. This fall we will be proposing two new rules and two rule changes to industry and interested parties. One of the new rules that we are proposing will be related to the ability to shift some costs of requested regulatory services from the department to the producer or party requesting the service. This rule is WAC 16-91. The second new rule that we are proposing is the development of a penalty matrix for animal health violations. This became necessary with the implementation of the enforcement package from last year's legislative session. This is WAC 16-90. One of the rule changes that we are proposing that will have a direct affect on private practitioners is the implementation of training for accredited veterinarians that conduct TB testing. Many states have gone to this regulation to better monitor the TB screen testing done in the state and provide the necessary training to make sure our first line of detection is doing the very best job possible. This rule is a new section (125) in WAC 16-86. And last but not least, we are proposing a change in the rules for restricted feedlots to reflect the heightened threat of TB to our state when untested cattle are allowed to intermingle with the resident population. This modified rule is in WAC 16-30 and confines cattle that have been designated to a restricted feedlot to remain in slaughter channels only. As usual, we sincerely desire your input in this process to assure that the end result is palatable to all concerned and still protect our livestock industry. Public hearings will be held on December 29, 2008 in Ellensburg, Washington and December 30, 2008 in Olympia, Washington. These rule proposals and amendments are posted on the web site at <http://agr.wa.gov/lawsrules/rulemaking/rulemakingactivity.htm>.

West Nile virus has been very active in Washington State this summer. As of this writing there have been 38 confirmed cases of the disease in the state. All have been in Yakima, Benton or Grant counties of Eastern Washington. The death rate has been about 40% and none of the horses that were clinical had been properly vaccinated according to the manufactures recommendation. WSDA sends notices out early in the year to encourage vaccination, but many owners are choosing not to vaccinate and take their chances with the disease. Vaccination is not the only control issue, but it does continue to be an important tool in the prevention of clinical signs and death in equine. In addition to the horses, two birds and 57 mosquito pools have tested positive at the last report. Six of the birds were discovered on the West side of the state, but no horses have been confirmed on this side. Three human cases were diagnosed as well, all either in Eastern Washington or having been exposed in Eastern Washington. The update on the VS website is outdated, but the last update showed Washington with 25% of the cases for West Nile in the nation.

On-going enforcement activities are taking place and most of the feedback we are receiving from industry is positive. Animal Health Investigator Rick Daugherty and Field Veterinarian Dr. Jerry Pospisil, along with Jodi Jones, have been working extensively on an illegal dog import case from California. Sick and injured dogs were brought in without verifiable rabies vaccination, no vet inspection certificate, or heartworm testing. Eighty-four dogs were originally brought in to one place and as many as 23 dogs were sent to an overflow residence. Significant numbers of these dogs (15) have died and the most recent development has been the ability to find a rescue organization in Oregon that has taken 17 of the dogs. This program is continuing to make an impact on the illegal imports into the state and provide protection for our animal industries.

NEWS FROM COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT LEADS

AVIAN HEALTH – Dr. Lora Davis

During the 2008 fair season, WSDA completed surveillance testing for Salmonella Pullorum-Typhoid (PT) testing and Avian Influenza (AI) at 17 Washington State poultry exhibits. By the end of October, WSDA had tested 925 birds for Avian Influenza and 958 birds for PT. All tests were negative for both PT and AI.

Currently, WSDA has 94 backyard poultry owners who volunteer to have their flocks tested quarterly for Avian Influenza. During the third quarter of 2008, routine Avian Influenza testing of backyard poultry flocks was suspended due to funding cuts. However, in high-risk counties where wild waterfowl have tested positive for H5 or H7 Avian Influenza, backyard flock testing continued through the third quarter. A total of 180 eggs and 29 tracheal swabs from 21 flocks located in high-risk counties tested negative for AI from August to October 2008.

As part of routine Avian Influenza surveillance, WSDA established an Avian Health Hotline for reporting sick and/or dead birds. Since June 2007, the hotline has received over 100 calls to report sick birds and/or sudden, unexplained deaths in domestic poultry. WSDA veterinarians have responded to 40 sick/dead bird calls and tested a total of 225 birds for AI. All AI tests conducted in sick/dead birds were negative.

The three most commonly diagnosed infectious diseases resulting from follow-up to avian morbidity and mortality reports include *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (MG), Marek's disease (MD), and infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT).

FAD – Dr. Paul Kohrs

The third quarter of 2008 was very busy for WSDA. On July 24th, the Department participated in a hands-on training exercise emphasizing PPE in the event of an AI outbreak. Leadership for the RVC again was displayed and WSDA was well represented in the meeting and participated at training and participation level. Medical evaluations and respirator training for RVC members were made available at this training and others held throughout the summer.

In August, Drs. Kohrs and Faux received additional ICS structure and utilization training in a disease response. This will be useful training not only for disease response, but for future training of RVC members in the ICS structure used in disease response. Also in August, Drs. Kohrs, Faux, Davis and Howlett met with the management of Woodland Park Zoo to discuss and assist them in a FAD response plan. This was a very productive meeting and the beginning of a dialogue on the impact of an FAD such as FMD or AI on the collection of animals at the zoo and the response to such a disaster.

Dr. Kinsel has been working on the disease reporting system as outlined in the work plan. This is very nearly ready for practitioners to begin using and should streamline the disease reporting process for practitioners particularly FAD awareness.

On September 17th, several WSDA staff attended a FAD Risk Communication training sponsored by WSU and the National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense. This one day training was useful in creating the appropriate messages for key people that may be asked to provide information to the public in the event of a response. In addition, Dr. Smith attended the AgErt training at CDP. This is outstanding training in PPE, sample handling, and ICS. Dr. Smith had barely returned and was requested, along with Dr. Tran and Dr. Davis, to assist Idaho Department of Agriculture and USDA with a LPAI response (Sept. 21st-26th) in a gamebird farm in Idaho. This was a great opportunity for WSDA to participate in an actual response and the nurturing of a regional sharing concept of equipment and personnel in the event of an animal health incident.

Throughout the summer, WSDA monitored the situation in Normandy Park with the Piro horses. Tick surveillance was conducted on a regular basis and no ticks were discovered. The final order of the quarantine has been hung up in the legal process and no blood testing has been done in approximately a year because of those limitations.

JOHNES – Dr. Mark Kinsel

This quarter Dr. Kinsel spent 51.5 hours finishing the Johne's disease risk assessment paper. This paper describes the management practices used by Pacific Northwest dairies relative to Johne's disease risk and which of these practices had the largest influence on reducing Johne's disease. This paper, after internal review, will be submitted to the *Bovine Practitioner* journal for publication.

During this quarter, Dr. Kinsel also served as a member of the Strategic Planning subcommittee for the USAHA Johne's Disease committee. He participated on conference calls regarding proposed changes to the USDA Johne's Disease Uniform Methods and Rules document. Dr. Kinsel also participated on monthly conference calls with other Johne's disease DJC's.

Finally, the Johne's disease 2008 work plan had to be revised because Washington State University could no longer participate in the Johne's disease PCR validation study. Funds were reallocated to supporting Johne's disease assessment by private practitioners during the fourth quarter of 2008.

SCRAPIE – Dr. Ben Smith

The work plan for the '08 Scrape cooperative agreement was officially approved by USDA at the end of July. Unfortunately, the delay has caused WSDA to miss the season for lamb genotyping.

In mid-August, Dr. Smith investigated a call regarding a ewe that was demonstrating neurological symptoms. It was determined that she was a suspect for scrapie. USDA indemnified the ewe and Dr. Smith hauled her to WADDL



where she was determined to have scrapie with confirmation from NVSL. Late in September, WSDA went back and genotyped the flock and found one QQ animal that was later removed for sampling.

Lots of scrapie information was sent to the fairs this fair season and some additional time was spent putting out new information and talking to county agents and producers. Tamme Hirtzel, veterinary technician, spent some time at the Enumclaw Livestock Market observing their methods for recording ID and helping them stay compliant.

Dr. Smith worked with the Animal Identification program to develop an outreach and education brochure on Scrapie and Animal Identification, approved by the State Veterinarian, and sent to WSDA's Graphic Designer to improve the visual appearance of the brochure prior to sending to the printers. The Scrapie brochure answers producer's questions on the Scrapie Eradication Program and the Scrapie Flock Certification Program and their participation in the National Animal Identification System.

Per the work plan, WSDA purchased a refrigerator unit for BestFed sheep slaughter to use for storing heads when USDA is not at the plant. Refrigerating or cooling heads will enable more to be saved for collection, which occurs once weekly.

SWINE HEALTH – Dr. Jerry Pospisil

During the third quarter of this year, the number of garbage feeding surveys totaled 37. This is down by 13 from the second quarter. The decrease is most likely due to concentration on avian PT testing at 17 identified fairs throughout the state, which took up much of WSDA field veterinarians' time and also that of office staff.

To our knowledge, there are no new garbage feeders in our state. We traced down two leads but they proved to be false information.

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