

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

Volume 47

April 2020

Message from the Animal Health Branch Chief

By: Kent Fowler, DVM

COVID-19 is a viral enemy that we cannot visualize and yet it is devastating the health of our nation's people by the thousands and severely weakening the greatest economy in the world. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the dedicated staff of the Animal Health Branch, of the California Department of Food and Agriculture and of the entire essential agricultural industries in continuing to provide this State and nation with safe and nutritious food during the most difficult time in our country's history. At a time when everyone would like to hunker down with family, we are seeing heroes emerge—health care responders, safety and enforcement responders, farmers, ranchers, truckers and all who are involved in keeping our nation fed. All of you hold your heads high, we will get through this pandemic and be a stronger nation and people because of the extreme adversity and challenges we have faced and conquered.

Update on Southern California Virulent Newcastle Disease Incident

By: Felicia Pohl, BS; and Elise Chad, DVM, MS



From the beginning of the virulent Newcastle disease outbreak from May 16, 2018 through March 27, 2020, virulent Newcastle disease has been detected on 498 premises in the following California counties: Riverside, San Bernardino and Los Angeles, and singular, isolated positive premises in Ventura, Alameda, and San Diego.

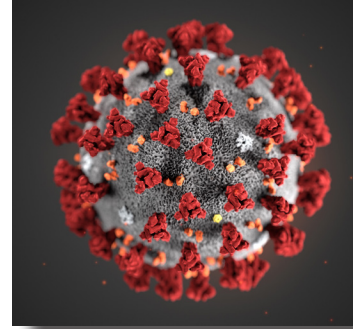
The most recent cases were found over a month ago in the Bloomington-area in San Bernardino County and the CDFA/USDA response team has transitioned to Freedom from Disease testing in order to ensure the disease is eradicated from the regional quarantine area and the United States. Continued negative testing in the Freedom of Disease surveillance may result in lifting the Regional Quarantine by late Spring. The team also continues to respond to sick calls by concerned citizens.

During this unprecedented time of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it is important to remember

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Update on Southern California Virulent Newcastle Disease Incident - *continued*

that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has defined Food and Agriculture workers as “Essential Critical Infrastructure”. The work related to Newcastle disease eradication supports a safe and healthy food supply for Californians and must continue because this disease is a threat to the poultry and eggs that are an important part of the food chain. The sooner we can verify that the virus is no longer present, the sooner residents can safely and legally repopulate their backyards with poultry.



Our personnel have expanded on their biosecurity measures by following COVID-19 guidelines put forth by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). This includes, among other actions, social distancing whenever possible by holding meetings with community leaders and youth groups via phone and canceling or postponing outreach activities at fairs, swap meets, and other public events.

Our goal is to move through this final phase of testing and lift the quarantine in a safe and efficient manner. We ask for the Southern California community to continue to pull together and:

1. If you are in the regional quarantine area (<https://arcg.is/0bbeTW0>), stop moving poultry without permission from CDFA (so we can help ensure the movement will not spread virus);
2. Call the Sick Bird Hotline at 866-922-2473 if you see signs of disease (twisted neck, green diarrhea, or high death rate in a flock);
3. Use good biosecurity practices (sanitation actions that limit the spread of any disease from flock to flock); and
4. Cooperate with our testing teams so we can reach our statistical testing goals and lift the quarantine as safely and quickly as possible.

We are sincerely grateful for the continued cooperation and support from the community and together we will get through this.

Animal Disease Traceability Updates

By: Rebecca Campagna, DVM, MPH; Kristen Cox, BS; and
Amanda Murray, DVM, MPVM, PhD

USDA Policy on Transitioning to Electronic ID for Cattle – Open for Public Comment Soon

In 2019, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) retracted its proposed timeline that outlined a transition to phase out metal visual-only ear tags and move to exclusive use of electronic ear tags as the official identification (ID) of cattle currently covered by federal animal disease traceability (ADT) regulations. However, a transition to electronic ID for these cattle is still a priority for USDA as part of a national effort to advance traceability. The USDA is currently preparing a notice detailing the policy change to transition to electronic ID. This policy change will soon be published in the Federal Register and open for public comment here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/>. Once posted, the notice will be available for public comment for 90 days. As the posting date has not been determined, we encourage all stakeholders to check the website regularly, starting in mid-April, and provide comments on the notice.

Reminder: Dairy Cattle Official Identification Requirements

Just as a reminder, as of April 1, 2017, dairy cattle moving within California are required to have official identification (ID). In particular, dairy cattle born in California after January 1, 2017 must have official ID placed prior to leaving their birth premises and all dairy cattle, regardless of birth year, must have official ID on change of ownership.

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Animal Disease Traceability Updates - *continued*

Dairy cattle are exempt from this requirement if they are moving:

1. Directly to slaughter or
2. Directly to an "Approved Tagging Site" where they are identified upon arrival on behalf of their owner.

Approved Tagging Sites (ATS) are typically age-source verified calf ranches and some saleyards. *Calf haulers are **not** ATS's.*

Extended Equine Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (EECVI) Available to California Veterinarians

As a reminder, starting January 1, 2020, California veterinarians can now issue Extended Equine Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (EECVIs) for equines using GlobalVetLINK (GVL). This electronic movement document requires a current Equine Infectious Anemia test and is valid for up to six (6) months. This EECVI may be a favorable option for horses or other equines that frequently travel interstate, such as for shows or ranch work. Owners are required to log every trip movement to obtain a travel permit and must verify the health of the horses prior to travel. To utilize this service and create an EECVI, veterinarians must be signed up with GVL. To learn more about EECVIs and see which other states are participating in the program, visit <https://www.globalvetlink.com/eecvi/>.

COVID-19 and Animal Movements

The Animal Health Branch has received many questions about how COVID – 19 - and the control measures - are impacting livestock movement. Food and Agriculture is one of sixteen (16) essential functions in the critical infrastructure of the nation, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security. **As of March 30, 2020, California does not have any additional COVID-19 restrictions for animals being imported or traveling within California.** General entry and movement requirements for livestock still apply. CDFA's Border Protection Stations are operating normally, stopping all vehicles hauling livestock as well as reviewing movement documents. To view Governor Gavin Newsom's Executive Order and stay up-to-date on COVID-19 in California, please visit <https://covid19.ca.gov/>. Guidance documents and resources, as well as CDFA program updates, can be found on CDFA's COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/coronavirus/>.

USDA Proposes National List of Reportable Animal Diseases

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing a new National List of Reportable Animal Diseases (NLRAD) to further strengthen the country's ability to detect, respond to and control animal diseases. APHIS is seeking public comment on this proposed rule (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/04/02/2020-06697/national-list-of-reportable-animal-diseases>) for 60 days following publication in the Federal Register (4/2/2020). All comments will be considered before moving forward.

Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy (EHM) Updates

By: Emily Nietrzeba, DVM

A 14-year-old pony mare in Alameda County displaying neurologic signs was confirmed positive for Equine Herpesvirus-1 (EHV-1) on March 13, 2020. The EHM mare was isolated and quarantined at a veterinary hospital. Forty-four (44) exposed horses on the home premises were quarantined with enhanced biosecurity measures including twice daily temperature monitoring. Two (2) additional horses displaying fevers only, an 18-year-old Quarter Horse gelding and a 15-year-old Warmblood gelding, have also been confirmed positive for EHV-1 on March 25th and March 29th, respectively. The index case mare improved dramatically following hospitalization and was released from individual quarantine on March 31st, after two (2) negative tests seven (7) days apart. The premises quarantine will be released when the last positive horse has two (2) negative tests results from samples obtained seven (7) days apart. Isolation continues to be our best tool in preventing the transmission of EHV.

Foreign Animal Disease Investigations: January 1 - March 31, 2020

By: Alireza Javidmehr, DVM, MPVM, PhD

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Animal Health Branch (AHB) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) personnel investigated two hundred and nine (209) Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) suspicious cases from January 1 to March 31, 2020 (Table 1). A large number of Senecavirus-A (SVA) infections among the swine shipped to slaughterhouses in the Modesto area triggered one hundred eighty-four (184) FAD investigations, almost eighty-eight percent (88%) of all statewide FAD investigations. Even though SVA is an endemic disease, due to the similarity of symptoms to Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), it must be considered as one. Any animal diseases presenting similar signs to FADs must be treated as such until FADs can be ruled out.

To protect California's livestock industry and for food supply security, private practitioners, diagnostic laboratories, animal hospitals, and producers must report signs of the emergency conditions outlined in the California "List of Reportable Conditions for Animals and Animal Products" (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/animal_health/pdfs/CA_reportable_disease_list_poster.pdf) within twenty-four (24) hours by calling the CDFA AHB or the USDA APHIS VS District Office in their area. The AHB district offices' contact information can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

Table 1. Summary of FAD investigations from January 1 to March 31, 2020

AHB Districts	Disease	Species	Sample Type	Number of Investigations	Destination Lab*	NVSL Result
Modesto	Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Senecavirus A (SVA), Swine Vesicular Disease (SVD)	Porcine	Swab	184	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	All positive for SVA
	Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV)	Equine	Swab, Serum	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	Negative
	Schmallenberg/Akabane Disease	Bovine	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	Negative
	FMD, VSV	Bovine	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	Negative
Ontario	FMD, VSV	Ovine	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	Negative
Redding	FMD, SVA, SVD	Porcine	Swab	2	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	All positive for SVA
	FMD, VSV	Bovine	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	Negative
	virulent Newcastle Disease (vND)	Avian	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	Negative
	Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)	Canine	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	Negative
Tulare	FMD, SVA, SVD	Porcine	Swab	14	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	All positive for SVA
	FMD, VSV, Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF)	Bovine	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	Negative
	FMD, VSV, Bluetongue Virus	Caprine	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis	Positive for Contagious Ecthyma (Orf) & Pan Parapox Viruses

*NVSL: National Veterinary Services Laboratory, CAHFS-Davis California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory, Davis

Social Distancing Activity Idea During COVID-19

TAKE PHOTOS*
OF YOUR BIRDS
AND SUBMIT
THEM TO BE
CONSIDERED
FOR THE 2021
CDFA AVIAN
HEALTH
CALENDAR



*IMPORTANT PHOTO GUIDELINES:
[HTTP://WWW.CDFA.CA.GOV/AHFSS/ANIMAL_HEALTH/
/PDFS/PHOTO-DISCLAIMER.PDF](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/ANIMAL_HEALTH/PDFS/PHOTO-DISCLAIMER.PDF)

SUBMIT BY: MAY 31, 2020

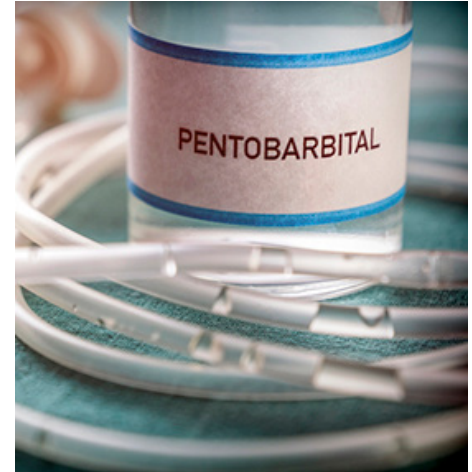
CONTACT:
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Prevention of Barbiturate Contamination in Rendered Products

By: Han Lai, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has determined that pentobarbital is a hazard in ingredients fed to pets and other animals. Pentobarbital residues are not affected by rendering temperatures (such as heat treatments capable of killing pathogenic organisms), and therefore FDA does not allow the use of animals euthanized with pentobarbital in the manufacture of animal feed. Because the FDA has not established a tolerance for pentobarbital, animal proteins (such as meat and bone meal) and fats tested with any detectable levels of pentobarbital cannot be used in food for any animal.

California currently has several rendering facilities that render animal carcasses to be used in manufacturing of many products including animal feed, fertilizers, and other value-added products. While this FDA regulation change is to protect animal food safety, it has brought great challenges to the rendering industry and its associated businesses. In assuring that rendering remains a viable disposal option for animal mortalities, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), rendering industry stakeholders, veterinarians, and animal owners will need to work together to fully socialize and investigate the issue and determine appropriate solutions. This fact sheet is created to reach out to veterinarians regarding the proper identification and disposal of barbiturate euthanized livestock and horses and how you can help to educate your clients making the choice.



While other euthanasia means such as captive bolt or gunshot are available alternatives and recommended by renderers, we recognize that ***pentobarbital may be the only feasible method*** for a given situation. In such cases, we strongly recommend the following:

1)



Clearly communicate, preferably in writing, limitations for disposing of the euthanized carcass(es) with your client. Call the rendering plant that services the client's farm or operation to notify the dispatcher of the farm and number, species, and date the animal(s) was euthanized with pentobarbital. Educate clients about the potential for cross-contamination of euthanized animal carcass(es) with other dead stock intended for rendering. Prevent fluids from euthanized carcasses from contaminating the dead stock pile. Euthanized carcasses should be secured to prevent wildlife and other scavengers from access.

2)

“P”

Establish a method for permanently marking animals euthanized with pentobarbital to identify and separate animal remains that cannot be rendered from those that can and should be. Any such permanent marking shall stay with the carcass, not be easily removed or lost, consistently applied within a state or region, and the use and meaning of the marking communicated to all renderers and dead haulers operating in the area. Due to the seriousness of this issue and its potential adverse impact on the vital rendering industry sector, CDFA is proposing a new regulation requiring marking of the animal by the veterinarian performing the euthanasia when the animal is euthanized. Marking with a high visibility orange capital letter “P” on the forehead of the animal has been suggested by the rendering industry representatives and CDFA will continue to seek recommendations from the California Veterinary Medical Association and other interested stakeholders to identify the best practical marking method(s) as it proceeds with the rulemaking process.

3)



For euthanized livestock or other large animals that the client has indicated rendering as a preference, please communicate clearly with the client that only non-chemical forms of euthanasia will be used.



Staff Biographies

Nick Johnson joined CDFA in February of 2020 as a Livestock Inspector for the Animal Health Branch Emergency Preparedness and Response System. Nick came from California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) where he worked as an inmate supervisor in plant operations. Nick attended California State University Chico where he majored in Agriculture Science and obtained his teaching credential in 1998. Nick and his wife Sara moved to Sacramento so his wife could attend McGeorge Law School and Nick began teaching agriculture at Vacaville High School. After thirteen (13) years in education, he needed a change and moved to CDCR as Supervising Groundskeeper. In the evenings, Nick was hired by Solano Community College to go back to the prison and teach Introduction to Horticulture to the inmate population.



Nick is an avid sportsman who loves to hunt and fish. He has a 13-year-old daughter, Rylie, who is a competitive water polo player and enjoys his weekends watching her games and being an armchair coach. He also enjoys competing in barbecue competitions and spending time with his wife of twenty-one (21) years, Sara.



Joseph Shipley joined CDFA's Animal Health Branch on the last day of 2019 as an Office Technician. Joseph came from California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), Joint Field Office for Directive 4407 (The Camp Fire) where he was also an Office Technician with first the Logistics Branch then the Finance and Administration Branch as the Incident Command Post (ICP) reached its peak and then began winding down to the closing of the ICP. Prior to CalOES, he worked at Cosumnes River College while working towards an Economics Major and eventual transfer to Sacramento State University. During this time, he acquired three other Associates degree's as well. His first experience in the State was with the California Conservation Corps, where he was assigned to the Fortuna Center for two years during which he promoted to a Crewmember Specialist.

Joseph is a quiet person in his personal life, preferring reading or games that allow exploration, when he cannot go for walks around Elk Grove. He also enjoys watching his two-year-old nephew as time allows.

He knows his career is just beginning and is profoundly grateful to CDFA for this work opportunity.

Contact Information



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FOOD & AGRICULTURE

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Permit Line: (916) 900-5052

State Veterinarian and Director, Animal Health and Food Safety Services

Dr. Annette Jones
(916) 900-5000

District Offices Veterinarian In Charge (VIC)

Redding: Dr. Michael Poulos
2135 Civic Center Drive, Room 8
Redding, California 96001
(530) 225-2140

Modesto: Dr. Randy Anderson
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Modesto, California 95358
(209) 491-9350

Tulare: Dr. Gregory Ledbetter
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Tulare, California 93274
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Ontario: Dr. Alisha Olmstead
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Other AHFSS Branches

Bureau of Livestock Identification
John Suther, Chief
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Milk and Dairy Food Safety
Dr. Stephen Beam, Chief
(916) 900-5008

Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety
Paula Batarseh, Chief
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Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship
Dr. Dennis Wilson, Chief
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Dr. Donald Herriott
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