

Animal Health Update

News from the Wisconsin State Veterinarian

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In this issue

Message from Dr. Ehlenfeldt

Update on new dog seller law

'Tis the season for EHV-1

...And related info on equine piroplasmiasis

About that deer in Ashland

If you're a vet to a jet-set pet

Call before you sign that CVI

Quick Links

 [Forward to a Friend](#)

[Animal Health Division](#)

[USDA Veterinary Services](#)

[Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory](#)

[Import permit request form online](#)

[Buy forms and supplies online](#)

[Subscribe to Our Newsletter!](#)

A seasonal word from State Veterinarian Dr. Bob Ehlenfeldt



As years go in the animal health world, 2010 has been a pretty quiet one in Wisconsin.

We did a lot of TB testing when we received cattle from other states that found TB in their herds - but we didn't find any. We had a media feeding frenzy over a CWD case, but it was a case that never existed. We had swarms of mosquitoes that nearly drove us crazy, but we didn't have any outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases. We had exotic Newcastle disease in cormorants, but

it never spread to domestic poultry. And we didn't have any out-of-the-blue diseases like monkeypox or CEM.

All in all, a relatively quiet year.

We did a lot of just keeping on. Keeping on with routine disease surveillance. Keeping on with record-keeping and training and inspections. Keeping on with trying to stay ahead and be ready for the next outbreak.

Worldwide, the story was mostly the same, but there were some blips. South Korea and Japan have been battling foot-and-mouth disease. A couple of weeks ago, someone died from H5N1 - "bird flu" - in Hong Kong, the first such death there in seven years. Those blips should serve as reminders for us. Bio-terrorism is always a possibility, and one we can't ignore, but global trade and travel, climate change, and complacency are probably the main risk factors for the Next Big Outbreak.

When the next big one comes, it's more likely to result from simple human nature. We want to travel freely to exotic places, and we rebel when we get asked too many questions at the airport. We like exotic pets and you can buy anything on the internet, so every day customs agents intercept illegal shipments. We fret over climate change, but we can't agree on what causes it, much less what to do about it. And we think what's always been will always be, so if we haven't had foot-and-mouth disease in Wisconsin for the past 95 years, we believe we never will.

It's that time of year when we sing "Should auld acquaintance be forgot?" No, old acquaintances shouldn't be forgot - and neither should old lessons.

So let's keep on keeping on. Happy holidays.

[Back to top](#)



Update on new dog seller law

Wisconsin Act 90, the law requiring licensing and inspection for sellers of 25 or more dogs a year, and some other businesses and organizations, takes effect June 1.

The law directs the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to write an administrative rule detailing required records and standards for facilities and dog care that dog sellers and other licensees will need to meet in order to get and keep a license. We did that, with the help of an advisory committee made up of representatives of groups that will need to be licensed as well as technical experts. That rule, called ATCP 16, has been approved by the ATCP Board and will now go to the new Legislature when it convenes. A committee in each house has up to 60 days to review the rule. They may let it take effect, ask for changes, or call a public hearing.

As legislators review the rules, opponents and supporters are likely to continue pressing for their positions. [Read more.](#)

[Back to top](#)

'Tis the season for EHV-1

Horse owners need to observe good biosecurity, especially during the winter months when equine herpesvirus-1 thrives.

The neurologic form of EHV-1 has been on the rise in the United States. Equine herpes viruses are very common in horses, and usually cause minor respiratory disease and abortions. It's the neuropathogenic form of EHV-1, causing the disease equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM), that is a major problem for most horses. Although still uncommon, when EHM strikes, it affects the horse's nervous system. Clinical signs include fever, incoordination, and inability to urinate or defecate. Eventually, it may lead to recumbency and death.



EHM outbreaks may occur where horses are congregated, with 10 percent of horses in a stable affected. The virus can survive and thrive in cold temperatures, and the majority of EHM outbreaks occur during the late fall, winter and spring.

EHV-1 is transmitted from horse to horse through nasal secretions and contact with aborted fetuses. Close contact between horses, and use of contaminated equipment such as feed and water buckets and grooming tools, can aid the spread of the disease. Introducing new horses into the herd is also a risk, and has been commonly reported prior to EHM outbreaks.

Although vaccines for EHV-1 are commercially available, there is no evidence that they prevent EHM. Once an EHM outbreak is in progress, strict quarantine measures are necessary to prevent the spread. There is no specific treatment or cure; supportive care and anti-inflammatory drugs are used to aid recovery. That's why good biosecurity practices are important every day. New arrivals to the barn should be isolated, as well as sick horses. And never share buckets, grooming tools, etc between horses without disinfecting first.

For more information visit the [USDA-APHIS website](#) and the [American Association of Equine Practitioners](#).

[Back to top](#)

...And related info

Equine piroplasmiasis (EP), a blood-borne disease considered foreign to the United States, showed up in Texas in late 2009. Traceouts from the infected farm eventually turned up more than 400 horses testing positive for *Theileria equi* or *caballi*, including one in Wisconsin. Several states now require negative EP tests for imports. In response, the USDA has released *A Literature Review of Equine Piroplasmiasis* as a resource for veterinarians and others within the equine industry.

The report is available [online](#) only. No hard copies will be published.

[Back to top](#)



About that deer in Ashland

You probably heard the reports last month about a CWD-positive deer on a hunting preserve in Ashland. And then, maybe, you heard that it was a false alarm. We want to explain what happened. [Read our press release.](#)

Samples from the deer had been positive on a *screening* test at Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. We had followed our normal procedure when we have a suspect case of CWD. Before making any public announcements, we notified the farmer and quarantined the farm, notified our partners at the DNR, and sat back to wait for confirmation from the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa.

But this was an area where CWD has never been found in either wild or farm-raised deer, it was just before gun deer season, and panic set in. Reporters somehow learned about the preliminary result, didn't understand the nature of screening tests, and reported that we had CWD on a farm - and before long, named the farmer and the location. We refused to confirm that information, and tried to get the facts out, mostly to no avail.

When we were finally able to announce that repeated confirmatory tests were negative, there were inevitably some media that didn't pick up that story and some people who missed it when it did run. A week later, the Chicago Tribune was still reporting that CWD had moved to a new area of Wisconsin.

It was all just frustrating to us. But for deer farmers, there was the risk of trade doors slamming shut on the basis of a news story. For businesses in northwestern Wisconsin that rely on the deer season for a big part of their income, there was the real risk of losing customers who decided they would pass on the deer hunt this year. For taxpayers, there was a lot of public employee time spent responding to a situation that wasn't, when we could have been dealing with other, real concerns.

The age of 24/7 news cycles and viral communication makes it impossible sometimes to get the truth out there ahead of the rumors. It's a real challenge for agencies trying to keep their constituencies informed.

But we'll keep trying to do the right thing. We won't hide anything, but we won't make premature announcements either. Call us anytime(608-224-4872) you hear a rumor and we'll tell you if it's true.

[Back to top](#)

If you're a vet to a jet-set pet...

The USDA has a new fillable electronic form online for use by accredited veterinarians issuing health certificates for small animals traveling internationally.

[The form](#) is posted on the USDA-APHIS website.

You can complete it online, print it in color, sign it and mail it (or have the owner take it) to the Madison office for endorsement, along with all other required documents. The USDA office will make all necessary copies. You will receive a copy of the endorsed certificate back via mail.

Some countries do not require endorsement, and some may not accept the electronic 7001 form. The client should check with the destination country's consulate to be sure this form is acceptable, as well as any other requirements that may apply.



Many international requirements are listed on the [USDA website](#). There is no information there for some nations, so the client will have to contact the nation's consulate or check the nation's

official government website.

If you have questions about international health certificates, contact Dr. Jane Mussey, DVM, the USDA's import/export officer in the Madison office by [email](#) or by calling 608-662-0600.

[Back to top](#)

Call before you sign that CVI

Missouri State Veterinarian Dr. Taylor Woods has asked his counterparts in other states to pass on the word - Missouri prefers that health certificates for large and small animals shipping to that state now be emailed to health.certificate@mda.mo.gov. For more information, call 573-751-4260.

This request prompts a reminder that it's always good to check with the destination state to be sure you and your clients are meeting requirements, which vary widely from one state to another, and over time within any one state. The USDA offers links to all states' requirements and contact information for their State Veterinarian offices [here](#).

[Back to top](#)

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