

# Animal Health Update

News from the Wisconsin State Veterinarian

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## From Dr. Bob Ehlenfeldt, Wisconsin State Veterinarian



Many of us spend a lot of time talking about biosecurity. I try to send the message at every opportunity that the best way to respond to an animal disease is to make sure you never have one in the first place. That's why we have test requirements and restrictions on interstate and intrastate movement for major livestock and zoonotic diseases. And it's why I'm sometimes frustrated when it seems as if we've forgotten the meaning of biosecurity: Preventing the introduction of disease organisms to susceptible species and the spread of disease within a group or area.

And then this past summer, I had a personal reminder of how easy it is to forget. I was in a meeting with other division heads in the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and the topic was the recent discovery of emerald ash borers--insects that destroy ash trees--in Wisconsin. We heard that one of the only ways to limit their spread is to stop movement of firewood. It was at that moment that I smacked my forehead, remembering that I'd just brought a bundle of leftover campfire wood home to Sun Prairie after a vacation to Door County. Making matters worse, I'd stacked it right next to a big ash tree in my yard. Fortunately, the EAB find wasn't in Door County, but still, I hosted a hot dog roast that evening over a nice fire.

Consider this a reminder: It doesn't take much of a lapse to lead to potentially devastating consequences.

### Training opportunity: Animals in Disasters

If you're a member of the Wisconsin Animal Response Corps, would like to be, or just have an interest in emergency management, register for the *free* Tri-State Veterinary Disaster Response Conference April 28-29 at the Stoney Creek Inn and Conference Center, La Crosse.

The agenda topics include:

- Lessons learned from Iowa flooding in 2008
- Preparing to be a veterinary responder
- Triage and critical care for animal patients
- Psychological first-aid for responders
- Roles of veterinarians in disaster shelters
- Federal and state roles in veterinary disaster response
- County animal response plans

Continuing education credit is available. Lunch and break refreshments are included. A block of rooms has been reserved at Stoney Creek for \$70/night plus tax. This rate will be good for

reservations made by March 30.

To register for the conference, contact Melinda Young by [email](#) or call 608-224-4874 *by Monday, March 30*.

To reserve your hotel room, call Stoney Creek Inn *by Monday, March 30*, at 608-781-3060 or toll-free, 800-659-2220, and be sure to mention that you are attending the Tri-State Veterinary Disaster Response Conference. [Hotel information and location](#)

This conference is being offered jointly by the Wisconsin Animal Response Corps, the Minnesota Veterinary Reserve Corps, and the Iowa Veterinary Rapid Response Team. For more information, contact Dr. Darlene Konkle by [email](#) or at 608-224-4902.

### **Poultry tester certification**

Here's a note to pass along for those of you who work with 4-H clubs, fairs, poultry shows, and others who test poultry for the Wisconsin Tested Flocks Program and National Poultry Improvement Program.

We'll be running our two-and-a-half hour training sessions at 10 sites around the state during April. The training is for those who are currently certified -- certification expires June 30 -- and those who want to be certified for the first time.

Certified testers can test their own or others' poultry so that flocks qualify for either the state or national programs or to meet individual testing needs, allowing owners to move birds for fairs, exhibits and sales. Testers must be 18 years old. They don't have to be veterinarians or veterinary technicians. The seminars focus on testing for pullorum, mycoplasma gallisepticum, and avian influenza.

You can find complete dates and locations on our [website](#).

### **Some quick reminders**

-Veterinarians, don't forget to contact your district veterinarian well in advance if you have a client who needs tuberculosis testing completed. This is especially important as we head into vacation season. This will assure that a district vet will be available -- if you call at the last minute, that's not always possible.

- We're offering *Understanding, Investigating and Prosecuting Animal Abuse* seminars for humane, law enforcement and animal control officers March 25, and for veterinarians and veterinary technicians March 26. The March 25 seminar is full and we're no longer accepting registrations. But we've extended the registration deadline for the March 26 seminar for veterinarians and vet techs. The daylong seminar will help prepare you to spot animal abuse and for involvement in court cases. It will run 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza, 4402 E. Washington Ave. **Register by this Thursday, March 19.** [Learn more](#).

### **FDA set to tighten protein ban**

You may have heard rumors and rumblings about a new Food and Drug Administration rule taking effect April 27. Mammalian proteins have been prohibited in ruminant feeds since 1997 as one of our nation's primary "firewalls" to prevent bovine spongiform encephalopathy -- BSE, or "mad cow disease" as the popular press calls it. This new rule tightens the prohibition further by banning brains and spinal cords from cattle 30 months or older in *any* animal feed.

The rule hits slaughter plants, renderers, animal feed manufacturers -- and farmers. It says that carcasses of cattle cannot be rendered or used for pet food unless the brain and spinal cord have been removed, or the animal can be shown to be 30 months or younger. For farmers, this means that dead animal haulers are unlikely to pick up downer cattle carcasses except at a very high cost. And it means a disposal problem.

Composting is one of the prime alternatives for disposal. Clark County's UW-Extension website offers a [factsheet](#) on this topic. We will be distributing composting information and other guidance for producers in the coming weeks to help them find ways to deal with cattle

carcasses. We'll include it in this newsletter, too, so you can share it with your clients and members.

### **Texas adds trichomoniasis regs for import bulls**

Beginning April 1, Texas will require that breeding bulls entering the state meet trichomoniasis requirements:

- They must be officially identified.
- Bulls 24 months or younger may enter the state certified as virgins that have not been commingled with female cattle. The certificate must be signed by the breeder and this information must be included on the certificate of veterinary inspection.
- Bulls older than 24 months must have tested negative within 30 days before entry, and have had no contact with females since the test. The test result document must accompany the CVI.
- TB and brucellosis requirements remain in place.

As always, we recommend that you contact the state veterinarian's office in the destination state well before the intended shipping date. For Texas, call the Texas Animal Health Commission, 512-719-0777.

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