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From State Veterinarian Dr. Bob Ehlenfeldt: Are there enough veterinarians in your part of Wisconsin?



We've all read about the nationwide shortage of food-animal veterinarians, and those of you driving long distances to farm calls know about it firsthand. The USDA is trying to do something to alleviate the problem, and it's asking for our help from the state level.

The [Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program](#) pays up to \$25,000 a year to help veterinarians repay school loans if they serve at least three years in shortage areas. Finding those areas is where we can have some input. The USDA asks State Veterinarians to nominate parts of their states, so I'm asking those of you on the ground to tell me where the need is the greatest in Wisconsin. Right now, we have one approved area in far northwest Wisconsin, nominated by a private practitioner last year and carrying over to this year.

The USDA looks at three different kinds of areas that are short of veterinarians:

- Type I areas can be anywhere that a veterinarian could expect to spend at least 80 percent of his or her time working with food animals.
- Type II areas are rural parts of the state where a veterinarian could expect to spend at least 30 percent of his or her time working with food animals.
- Type III areas are those where there is a shortage of veterinarians for public practice, working for government agencies as field veterinarians, epidemiologists, and slaughter inspection; in government laboratories; or at universities.

If you believe there are areas in Wisconsin that match these descriptions and need veterinarians, contact me. I need the names of the counties and other information to substantiate the need - failed recruitments, livestock numbers versus veterinarian numbers, unique needs, and potential consequences if we can't address the shortage.

Give me a call at 608-224-4872 or [email](#) me with your ideas. Thanks.

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Don't forget about brucellosis

The USDA is backing off surveillance measures for brucellosis, but that doesn't mean the disease is gone forever. In fact, the reduced surveillance efforts at the federal level make private practice veterinarians more important than ever in monitoring for brucellosis.



Brucellosis, also called Bang's disease or contagious abortion, mainly threatens cattle, bison and swine. It's also a zoonotic disease, sometimes called undulant fever in humans. It's a serious livestock disease, causing decreased milk production, weight loss, loss of young, infertility and lameness. The chief clinical sign, however, is abortion and sometimes, abortion storms.

We have largely eradicated brucellosis in the United States through calfhood vaccination, the semiannual ring tests on milk at the farm level, and testing adult slaughter cattle. The USDA is no longer funding vaccination or ring tests and plans to reduce testing at slaughter. In effect, the only surveillance that will exist will be what private practitioners see and test.

At the same time surveillance is on the decline, we are routinely seeing newly infected herds in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho that are being infected from a disease reservoir in the Yellowstone National Park bison and elk herds. A fair number of cattle come to Wisconsin from that region. Recently Texas announced it had an infected herd, and Texas is another major cattle source for us.

Please keep brucellosis in mind for your differential diagnosis when you see abortions and especially when you see abortion storms. In these circumstances, remember to exercise caution to avoid getting infected yourself. Note that brucellosis is a 24-hour reportable disease.

For more information about brucellosis, visit the [USDA-Veterinary Services website](#).

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About reportable diseases

We toss around the term reportable diseases, but lately we've gotten a few questions about just what diseases are reportable. There's a fairly short list of diseases that must be reported within 24 hours of when you first suspect them. There's a much longer list that need to be reported within 10 days. You can find both lists, along with information about how to report, on our [website](#).

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Animals in Disaster conference: Learn how to help in times of need



The Wisconsin Animal Response Corps and the Dane County Medical Reserve Corps will host a conference on Animals in Disasters 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Saturday, April 9, on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. The training will be geared to veterinarians and veterinary technicians and to disaster response planners in local government and private industry.

Topics will include the structure of an animal-related response, best practices, and lessons learned in disasters including Hurricane Katrina and the Haiti earthquake. Veterinary participants

will have a breakout session on triage, field and disaster medicine, and resources. Planners' breakout session will focus on incorporating animals into response plans. In the afternoon, there will be an emergency exercise in which participants move through stations as they are presented with different problems and cases.

The conference is free, with 6 continuing education credits available. Register by April 1 by contacting [Melinda Young](#), 608-224-4874. Please indicate whether you are in a veterinary field or a planner.

For more information about the conference or the [Wisconsin Animal Response Corps](#), contact Darlene Konkle, 608-224-4902, darlene.konkle@wisconsin.gov or visit us [online](#).

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Last word on those 200 dead cattle

You probably heard about the 200 dead cattle on a Portage County farm a few weeks back. Coming in the wake of widely-reported-but-not-unusual bird die-offs, this farmer's misfortune set the internet on fire. Even Time magazine wondered whether it was a sign of the apocalypse.

It seemed mysterious to laymen because a large number of cattle died in a brief time, and laboratory tests showed pneumonia, but did not find any bacterial or viral infection. But to veterinarians and pathologists, the feed ration became suspect almost immediately. The cattle were being fed vegetable processing byproducts, including sweet potatoes. Test results finally showed the presence of 4-ipomeanol, a toxin produced by mold on sweet potatoes and highly poisonous to cattle.

This case provided a couple of teachable moments.

First, livestock producers need to know what they're feeding their animals. Byproduct use in livestock feed is appropriate and can be beneficial, but farmers need to be aware of nutritional value and the quality, looking for mold and other problems. If they mix their own rations from commercial feeds, they have to read and follow the labels. They need to understand the risks and the advantages.

Second, it was a chance to explain just what the Animal Health Division does, because we got a lot of questions about why we were not out on the farm taking care of the situation. We're here to monitor for and respond to foreign animal diseases or other diseases that threaten human health, spread from farm to farm, or inflict economic damage on the state or the nation. None of these factors was present in Portage County. It was a production problem; there was no human health risk and no contagion. And while it certainly was an economic blow to this farmer, there was no risk of mass culls or trade doors slamming shut. There was no reason for us to be involved, and we had no authority to be involved.

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Pullorum testing certification seminars coming up

We'll be offering 10 pullorum tester training seminars in April. Anyone who wants to renew certification or become certified for the first time needs to attend one of the seminars. Current certifications expire June 30.

Those certifying for the first time will be trained to accurately perform an agglutination test. This training for new testers will occur after the presentation, and they will be required to perform the test. Participants must arrive by the starting time of the seminar. Preregistration isn't necessary. You must be at least 18 years old to be a certified tester.

Certification cost is \$25 for two years. The fee will need to be mailed to the Division of Animal Health within two weeks of completing the seminar, along with the signed form participants will receive at the seminar.

Click [here](#) for the seminar schedule. For more information, contact Margie Proost, margaret.proost@wisconsin.gov, 608-224-4877.

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And so are TB certification seminars

We have 10 seminars scheduled May 23-July 13 for certification to conduct caudal fold tuberculosis testing. The seminars are scheduled at locations around the state, with some afternoon and some evening programs, so no one should have to travel too far and everyone should find a suitable time. Find the schedule [here](#).

The training is required for veterinarians last certified in 2008, newly licensed veterinarians who plan to do TB testing, and others seeking certification in Wisconsin for the first time. The certification will be good until 2014.

There is no charge and preregistration is not necessary. For information, contact [Margie Proost](#), 608-224-4877.

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Fair season's coming

You can find our 2011 health rules for fair animals [online](#). One reminder about swine in particular: The intrastate certificate of veterinary inspection for swine going to fairs must include a statement from the certifying veterinarian that he/she has inspected the herd of origin and no apparent disease has been present in the herd for the past 30 days.

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Accreditation update

Currently accredited veterinarians, remember to submit your VS Form 1-36A for the new accreditation system if you have not already done so. The form is available [online](#) or at the Veterinary Services office at 1111 Deming Way, Suite 100, Madison, phone 608-662-0600.

For those seeking initial accreditation, you will need to complete the orientation seminar before sending in your form. If you wait until July 1 or later to complete the seminar, you will need to complete online training before taking the seminar and applying for accreditation. We will offer the seminar in early to mid-June in Madison, so you can still make the July 1 deadline. Further details will be available in the next newsletter.

For more information about the new accreditation program, visit the [USDA website](#).

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Pets going places?

Dr. Jane Mussey, USDA-Veterinary Services, says she sees more errors on health certificates for pets than for other species headed to international destinations. She offers some pointers:

- Start the process early enough to allow time to administer vaccinations and meet other requirements.
- Remember that the destination country sets the requirements. Always check online for requirements on the [USDA's website](#). If requirements are not listed for the nation you're looking for, check with the nation's nearest consulate. You can find these by Googling the name of the country and "consulate".

- If the destination country is in the European Union, there may be both EU and national requirements; check both.
 - The European Union requires ISO-compliant microchips, implanted before rabies vaccination, and the rabies vaccination must be done at least 21 days before presenting the certificate for VS endorsement. The UK has more complicated requirements that you can find by following a link from the USDA web site.
 - Report only those vaccinations on the certificate that the destination country requires.
 - The original rabies vaccination certificate signed by the veterinarian who administered it must accompany the health certificate presented for endorsement.
 - Fax health certificates and all supporting documents to 608-662-0602 at least a day before bringing the originals to the office for endorsement to be sure everything's in order.
 - Mailing or faxing requirements to your clinic or reading them over the phone isn't possible; you need to have access to email and the internet.
- If you have other questions about requirements or procedures, call Dr. Mussey at 608-662-0600.

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