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From State Veterinarian Dr. Bob Ehlenfeldt: Backyard poultry and the world

The Wisconsin State Journal ran a story in a recent Sunday paper detailing how to start your own backyard chicken flock. Under the heading of "Health and nutrition," the writer said "Chickens have relatively few health problems, most of which can be avoided by keeping their coop and run clean and dry."

I'm sympathetic to her urge to produce something on her own. After all, I'm the guy with a vineyard in my backyard. But her naïveté made me a little nervous, because she represents a movement. Every month or two, there's another report of another Wisconsin city considering an ordinance to allow backyard chickens.



But here's the part that makes me nervous. Taiwan just banned poultry from Nebraska because a backyard chicken flock showed up at an exotic bird market with low-pathogenic avian influenza. Nebraska found the case via routine testing at the market, and then found two more infected flocks whose owners had bought birds from the original one. Note: No commercial flocks were involved, yet those international trade doors started slamming.

This time it was low-path AI - no human health risk, little risk to commercial flocks. What happens when it's high-path H5N1, the strain that's been killing people along with birds in Asia? What about the fact that salmonella often arrives with chicks infected in utero, and can be passed to humans in eggs they handle?

Backyard flocks are open to wild birds, including wild waterfowl -- the reservoir for many strains of avian influenza. I imagine this writer would say her chickens don't mingle with wild waterfowl. But Madison is built on an isthmus between Lake Mendota and Lake Monona, with waterfowl flying overhead all the time. A co-worker who lives on the isthmus sees ducks wandering around her yard every spring, looking for nest sites.

This all makes me nervous, too, because it's not only chickens. We have all kinds of people with good intentions wanting to raise their own food or just live the country life, with a cow or two, some goats, some pigs, some horses. Often they are not aware of biosecurity measures, or don't believe they need those measures because they're small-scale. They also don't know, or don't believe, that they're risking their kids' health, their neighbors' health, their animals' health -- and the financial

health of farmers who need to make a living with their livestock.

Not every big farm is well-run, I know, and we have room in Wisconsin for all sizes and kinds of farms, including this new breed of farmers. But somehow we need to convince them that bacteria and viruses don't distinguish between small and large flocks and herds. We need them to realize that they may well be more vulnerable than big farms that have the resources to practice good biosecurity and hire veterinarians.

There's a lot riding on a few chickens.

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Update on EHV-1 outbreak

As you've probably heard, some horses that attended the National Cutting Horse Association's championships in Utah April 29-May 8 have tested positive for equine herpesvirus-1, and a number have died or been euthanized. Early on, show organizers reported that two horses from Wisconsin were among those from 29 states that might have been exposed at the show. As it turned out, the two horses were owned by Wisconsin residents, but kept in another state, so they did not enter Wisconsin after the show.

As of May 20, 33 horses in 8 states had confirmed EHV-1 or EHM -- equine herpes virus myeloencephalopathy, the neurologic form of EHV-1. Of those, 32 had been at the Utah show, and 7 have died or been euthanized. The USDA is posting updates and information on its [website](#).

We are not recommending that groups cancel their scheduled shows in light of this outbreak. However, we do ask you to remind your clients with horses that biosecurity is always important - not just when there is an outbreak. They should always isolate horses returning from competitions, trail rides, or any other event where they come in contact with other horses.

The USDA has downloadable brochures about [EHV-1](#) and [equine biosecurity](#). It's good information to share with clients.

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Dog sellers/facilities licensing ready for launch

With the June 1 launch date looming, completed applications are coming in and the first inspections of dog facilities are underway. We mailed out about 600 application packets, most of them to dog breeders who requested them. At this writing, about 70 licenses had been issued.

We have four inspectors and a compliance officer hired, trained and starting to conduct inspections. All five are already highly experienced in conducting inspections, working with licensees to achieve compliance, and enforcing regulations. We have a map of their [territories and their contact information](#) on our website.

These initial licenses will be issued before inspection, since we obviously will not be able to inspect every facility by June 1. They will expire Sept. 30, 2012, and licensees will be inspected during that time. Beginning Oct. 1, 2012, licenses will be good for one year, facilities will need to be inspected before receiving a license, and will be inspected once every two years after receiving a license.

Intrastate CVIs We've had a lot of questions about the new CVIs for the dog sellers program. We hope to have FAQs posted online soon. In the meantime, briefly, only those licensed under this program need to have dogs examined by a veterinarian and accompanied by an *intrastate* CVI when they sell dogs within Wisconsin. If you don't need a license, you don't need a CVI. Other things to know:

- ALL dogs entering Wisconsin need to come in with an *interstate* CVI, as they always have. In all probability, they will also need an *interstate* CVI if they're being sent to a different state; most states require it.
- If a licensee brings dogs into Wisconsin on an *interstate* CVI, and sells them within 30 days of the examination, no additional CVI is required. If the dog stays with them longer than that, it will need an *intrastate* or *interstate* CVI when it's sold or adopted, depending on where it's headed.

Note: for purposes of this law, "sell" means providing a dog in exchange for money or any other consideration. So, an adoption for a fee, donation, or goods is still a sale.

You can order [CVIs online](#).

For more information about the new law, visit us [online](#).

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Fish tales: Aquaculture tidbits

Workshop: Fish regulatory medicine We'll host this free workshop Sept. 19-20 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Pyle Center. We haven't filled in the entire program yet, but you can expect to learn about fish health assessments and certification to perform them, aquaculture biosecurity practices, diagnostic and epidemiological tools, and fish health regulations. Those attending will receive 10 continuing education hours - and a free lunch. Funding is provided by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We'll publish details and registration info here later in the summer, or keep an eye on the [aquaculture pages](#) of our

website.

Fish farm renewals online Fish farmers still need to register initially on paper, but they can now [renew their registrations](#) online. When they receive their renewal notices, the notice will contain a PIN number. Besides that number, they will need a checking account, an email address and Internet Explorer version 7 or higher on their computers. They will first need to set up an account, starting with the opening screen, then follow the instructions. Not to worry - we do still accept paper renewals, too.

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USDA studying heifer-raising

USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) is conducting the first study of heifer-raising operations, a growing segment of the dairy industry. Wisconsin is one of 21 states included in the study. The information gathered from producers will be used to evaluate management, including feeding and housing, and to identify biosecurity practices to minimize disease transmission.

NAHMS is looking for producers who raised at least 20 dairy heifers in 2010 for at least one operation other than their own. Producers who volunteer to participate will be asked to complete a questionnaire by Aug. 31. Volunteers will get a customized report comparing their operations with other operations in Wisconsin or the region, and upon request, a report on results from all 21 states.

Dr. Beth Patton is coordinating the survey for Wisconsin. To sign up, contact her at elisabeth.patton@wi.gov, 608-224-4891.

Other participating states are Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, North Dakota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Virginia and Washington.

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Accreditation seminar set for June 7

Our summer accreditation seminar is scheduled Tuesday, June 7, at the Lussier Family Heritage Center, 3101 Lake Farm Road, Madison ([map](#)). Registration will begin at 1 p.m., and the seminar will run 1:30-5 p.m. It is open to new graduates who have not completed the seminar and to veterinarians who have not previously been accredited in Wisconsin. For the latter, please bring the veterinary license numbers for all states where you are currently licensed. This will be your last opportunity to complete the seminar before July 1. After that date, you will need to complete online training before taking the seminar and applying for accreditation.

Reminder: New accreditation system If you were accredited as of Feb. 1, 2010, you need to elect to participate in the National Veterinary Accreditation Program, or lose your accreditation. Submit your VS Form 1-36A for the new accreditation system via fax, mail, or email. The [form](#) is available online or by contacting the Veterinary Services office at 1111 Deming Way, Suite 100, Madison, phone 608-662-0600.

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

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Remember 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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Johne's reimbursement deadlines extended

Producer reimbursement First, the bad news: USDA funding has ended for reimbursing producers for part of their Johne's disease costs. We anticipate that state funding will still be available, but will not know for sure until the Legislature and Governor complete the new budget.

Now, the good news. We do still have some money left over from 2010 to reimburse producers. If your client submitted a 2011 application form by Feb. 1 and has a current risk assessment and herd management plan on file, he or she can still submit invoices for expenses incurred January through June of this year. If you have clients who submitted an application but missed the Feb. 1 deadline, they may be eligible. And your clients can still apply for reimbursement if they have not already done so. These latter two classes will be eligible on a first-come, first-served basis. All invoices must be submitted by July 15.

Veterinarian reimbursement We have extended the deadline for sending W-9 forms needed to reimburse veterinarians who register for courses for Johne's disease certification or recertification. If you registered online since April 1, 2010, or register by June 30, you now have until July 15 to send your W-9 forms. Clinics that pay for multiple registrations should submit one W-9 with a note indicating who it covers. We automatically receive notification when you register for the courses, so you don't need to inform us.

For information, contact Dr. Beth Patton, 608-224-4891, elisabeth.patton@wi.gov.

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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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