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If you have not received our newsletter before, welcome and we hope you'll find it useful. For those of you who have received it previously, you'll notice some changes. It looks different -- we've started

using a different service, which is still developing its capabilities. We hope to be able to link from "In this issue" to the items below in the future, and to add photos.

Please note that you cannot reply to us directly from this email. You can email donna.gilson@wi.gov with comments or questions.

From State Veterinarian Dr. Bob Ehlenfeldt:

Lost opportunities?

Let's talk about East Coast fever.

You might wonder why I'm bringing up a foreign animal disease – and a tropical one – when I could be talking about our own Eastern equine encephalitis outbreak. Well, I figured if I led with EEE, you wouldn't read this because the outbreak is pretty well over. But bear with me; I'll get to it.

A speaker at the U.S. Animal Health Association annual meeting earlier this month talked about East Coast fever as an example of lost opportunity's effect on livestock producers. ECF is a parasitic disease of cattle, sheep and goats, and is endemic in Africa. There is a vaccine available, but many producers don't use it, because treatment costs no more than vaccination. But when their animals contract ECF, treatment costs are just one part of their losses. They also lose food, fiber, and animals' offspring. Because livestock are an indicator of wealth in their society, they also lose net worth.

That called to mind an email I'd received from a colleague at the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. He said veterinarians were telling him that they'd been seeing clinical cases that were likely Eastern equine encephalitis, but their clients were refusing to pay for diagnostic testing. The WVDL fee for antibody testing is $66. To test the brain for West Nile virus, EEE, EHV-1 plus histopathology is $87. Rabies testing at the State Lab of Hygiene is free. Yet, he estimated, WVDL probably received samples from 20 percent or fewer of the horses that died from EEE.

That leaves us – and horse owners -- without some fairly important information about the extent of the outbreak. Still, it's understandable that horse owners who have already called a veterinarian and lost an animal are unwilling to pay more to provide others this information.

What's less understandable is why they are unwilling to spend $10 for a multivalent vaccine. The American Association of Equine Practitioners recommends vaccinating horses for tetanus, rabies, WNV and EEE. If you're feeding a horse for a year, why wouldn't you spend another $10 to keep it alive and healthy? If nothing else, the vaccine is available over the counter.

Lost opportunity. Opportunity to keep an animal healthy and comfortable. Opportunity to provide information that your neighbors might benefit from. Opportunity to enjoy a horse for its full life span. Opportunity to get full value from a workhorse.

It's hard to put a price tag on those opportunities. But it's probably more than $10 a year.

EEE update

With colder weather, the Eastern equine encephalitis outbreak appears to be over. We had 36 confirmed cases, including 2 alpacas and a pheasant. The rest were horses, mostly in north central Wisconsin. As noted above, that probably represents about 1 in 5 cases that actually occurred. From all indications, virtually all the infected horses were unvaccinated.

The last major outbreak of EEE that we experienced in Wisconsin was in 2001, and before that, there had been no EEE reported in the memory of anyone here. Since then, we've had sporadic cases, but this is the first time we've had an outbreak of this proportion. Here's a case breakdown:

- Bayfield County, 1 horse
- Chippewa County, 3 horses
- Clark County, 7 horses
- Dunn County, 2 alpacas and 1 horse
- Langlade County, 1 horse
- Lincoln County, 4 horses
- Marathon County, 4 horses
- Price County, 3 horses
- Taylor County, 7 horses
- Waupaca County, 1 horse
- Unknown location, 2 horses

It's a reminder that we can't let down our guard in Wisconsin. However, the actions we in the State Veterinarian's office can take are very limited. EEE is a reportable disease, but the burden of reporting it is on private practice veterinarians. There is no point in quarantining infected farms, because it is mosquitoes that transmit it; horses don't transmit it one to another. The human health threat from this strain of EEE is extremely small, and its presence does not lead to trade barriers. There is no reason for this to be a regulatory disease. We are limited to cautioning horse owners to vaccinate their horses or booster vaccines, and to limit exposure as much as possible.

We did not send a disease alert to veterinarians, for a couple of reasons. First, we did issue a general press release to reach horse owners via the media and the Wisconsin Horse Council. We know that releases about animal diseases get wide coverage, and we also assume that veterinarians pay some attention to the general news media and the ag media. Second, we trust veterinarians to be well aware that mosquito-borne illnesses are always a threat in Wisconsin. We assume that they encourage clients to vaccinate for these diseases every year, and that they look for these diseases when horses exhibit neurological signs in summer and fall. If this were something we just don't expect to see in Wisconsin, it would be a different story. But EEE should be largely business as usual for practitioners with equine clients.

For more information about EEE, visit the USDA's website.

"Doc" O'Connor retires; TB and poultry contacts change

Dr. Don O'Connor has retired from the Animal Health Division. Many of you were used to calling "Doc" with your questions about bovine tuberculosis in cattle and cervids. He was also responsible for poultry programs – the National Poultry Improvement Program, and avian influenza and exotic New Castle surveillance. His duties have been shifted to others these days.

Dr. Jim Meronek of the USDA Veterinary Services will be your TB contact for questions about regulations, testing and certification. You can reach him at:

Phone 608-662-0600, ext. 608
Fax 608-662-0601
Email james.t.meronek@aphis.usda.gov

For information about poultry issues, your contact will be Dr. Myron Kebus here in the Division of Animal Health. His contact information:

Phone 608-224-4876
Fax 608-224-4903
Email myron.kebus@wi.gov

And you can probably find Doc on a golf course somewhere.

Dog seller program making progress

Since the new law took effect June 1, requiring licenses for larger dog seller businesses, we've processed 265 applications for dog seller, dealer, and shelter licenses, and done the initial inspection on 130 of them. Of those 130, we issued full-status licenses for 112 and conditional licenses for 18. The conditional licenses mean the applicants are getting time to correct significant issues – mostly enclosure size and facility construction – while still conducting business.

For this first round of licensing, we are issuing temporary licenses to applicants, doing initial inspections and then modifying the licenses, which will expire Sept. 30, 2012. From that point on, applicants will need inspections before we issue licenses.

It's an educational process, as is the case with any brand new regulatory program. We've been getting some good feedback from licensees about the time our four inspectors take to explain and work with them to meet the requirements of the new law.

Some reporters have questioned us about why we have not shut down any of the worst operations, or brought them into compliance. In truth, we knew that would not happen immediately. We knew the reputable breeders and shelters would be the first to comply, and we wanted to get them taken care of right away. The worst operations are unlikely to voluntarily apply for licensing or make the changes needed to receive a license. That doesn't mean we can just shut them down. We will try to work with them to bring them into compliance with the law. If they refuse, we will need to ask district attorneys to file charges. Like all other legal matters, everyone is entitled to due process.

We do have an online complaint form. For more information about the dog seller program, visit us online.

CWD funds disappearing

Federal funds have underwritten much of our chronic wasting disease surveillance for nearly 10 years. As we're all aware, the federal government is searching for ways to cut spending, and CWD prevention and surveillance has been targeted.

Under a cooperative agreement with the USDA, we have been able to reimburse producers up to $50 per sample for their veterinary costs to meet the testing requirement, and pay them half the costs to double-fence their property when necessary. That agreement ended July 31 and will not be renewed.
In addition, USDA has picked up the laboratory fees for surveillance testing. Although Congress has yet to approve USDA's budget for FY 2012, which began Oct. 1, we have been informed that the CWD budget is likely to be cut to $1.925 million, down from $13.9 million. That has eliminated federal indemnity reimbursements for veterinary costs charged to owners for submitting tissues for CWD testing, funding for state wildlife surveillance, research at the National Wildlife Research Center – and paying lab fees for CWD tests after Dec 31. Testing to confirm positive screening tests would still be covered.

We have been talking with producer groups about how to proceed with the program in light of these changes. Stay tuned. In the meantime, if you have questions, contact Dr. Richard Bourie, 608-224-4886, richard.bourie@wi.gov.

Johne's disease program changes

The Johne's disease control program will continue to provide services to producers and veterinarians, even though it has lost both federal and state funding for testing, vaccination, veterinary certification and risk assessments.

The herd classification program remains in place, to help producers gauge their risk level and manage Johne's disease in their herds. Classifying their herds also allows them to avoid the implied warranty when they sell cattle. No reimbursement will be available for classification testing, however.

We will continue to train and certify veterinarians to vaccinate and conduct risk assessments. We will not be able to cover the tuition for the online program, but our district veterinarians will still go with trainees to a farm to conduct the risk assessment for the training and will provide hands-on

vaccination training. District veterinarians will also be available to consult with herd veterinarians on Johne's disease management in their clients' herds.

Dr. Beth Patton is still collaborating with the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine, and is still available for consultation and to present educational programs for veterinarians and producers.

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

Minnesota now TB-free

The USDA has returned Minnesota's status to TB-free, effective Oct. 4. The move means that we have lifted all testing requirements for cattle coming from Minnesota or re-entering Wisconsin after being in Minnesota. They do still need official identification and certificates of veterinary inspection, which is standard for all livestock entering Wisconsin.

For complete import requirements for animal entering Wisconsin, visit our website.

USDA issues goat report

The USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (commonly called NAHMS) has issued a report on small-scale goat operations. It contains a lot of interesting information, including the fact that, besides meat and milk, goats are also kept for brush control, livestock shows, pack animals, and pets.

For veterinarians, the greatest interest may lie in the study's findings about goat producers' need for greater awareness of disease, especially zoonotics, and of biosecurity practices. In addition, only about a third of the goat producers surveyed had consulted a veterinarian in the last year. Given the growth of the dairy goat industry in Wisconsin in recent years, these are useful findings for veterinarians here.

The full report is available as a PDF online.

Veterinarians online

We're developing an area on our department website with material of particular interest to veterinarians. So far we have links to this newsletter, both current and back copies, and a place for you to subscribe; to online orders for veterinary supplies; and to information about continuing education opportunities that we are offering. Check it out.

Help for new farmers

We know clients often confide in their veterinarians, so here is some good financial advice you large animal vets can pass on to your clients: Tax credits are available for beginning farmers and established farmers who help them get started.

Here's how it works. A farmer with at least 10 years in the business leases assets to a farmer with less than 10 years in the business, and net worth less than $200,000. For the first three years of the lease, the established farmer gets a refundable state tax credit against depreciable assets worth 15 percent of the lease amount for the tax year. The beginning farmer can also get a refundable state tax credit up to $500, one time only, if he/she enrolls in an approved financial management program.

To qualify, both farmers need to apply for certification to the Wisconsin Farm Center, located in the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. They need to file a business plan and a copy of the lease, and describe the beginning farmer's training.

Read more here, or contact the Farm Center toll-free at 1-800-942-2474 or email farmcenter@wi.gov.

Export advice

Veterinarians completing certificates of veterinary inspection for international shipment need to be working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture rather than the state agriculture department. If you have questions, you can contact Dr. Jane Mussey at 608-662-0600, ext. 609, email jane.e.mussey@aphis.usda.gov. You should also send CVIs to the Wisconsin office of USDA-Veterinary Services: 1111 Deming Way, Suite 100, Madison, WI 53717, fax 608-662-0601.

To ship animals within the United States, contact the state veterinarian's office in the state of destination for requirements. You can find this contact information on our website.