

Equine HEALTH REPORT

A National Institute for Animal Agriculture Publication

Spring/Summer 2004

Vesicular Stomatitis Diagnosed in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado

Vesicular stomatitis (VSV) cases continue to climb in the Southwest, following the first VSV confirmation on May 18 from the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa of horses at one premises in the State of Texas. A total of 17 premises in Texas, New Mexico and Colorado have now reported the infection, which have been confirmed by NVSL.

VSV is a viral disease that primarily affects horses, cattle, and swine. The virus that causes VSV has a wide host range. VSV also occasionally affects sheep and goats. In affected livestock, VSV

causes blister-like lesions to form in the mouth and on the dental pad, tongue, lips, nostrils, hooves and teats. These blisters swell and break, leaving raw tissue that is so painful that infected animals generally refuse to eat and drink and show signs of lameness.

On May 10, a foreign animal disease investigation was initiated on at a roping facility in Balmorhea, Texas, just south of the New Mexico border, due to a report of tongue lesions in three horses at the facility. Six additional horses and eight steers are on the infected premises that show no signs of lesions. Serum was taken from all nine horses and submitted to NVSL for testing.

After the first round of testing, three out of the nine horses were cELISA positive for VSV. One of the three horses had a CF titer of >1:40 for the New Jersey (NJ) strain.

The second set of serum samples from the three horses were received by NVSL on May 18. Results from that test were consistent with the case definition for VSV, which is based on compatible clinical signs and appropriate laboratory confirmation. These may include virus isolation or a four-



USDA Photo

fold increase in complement fixation (CF) or serum neutralization titer in paired sera collected at least seven days apart.

Preliminary test results on the steers from the infected facility were negative on the cELISA for the NJ strain. Additional testing on the steers is being conducted by NVSL.

Subsequently, similar protocols have been followed regarding suspected infections. Serum is taken from potentially infected animals and submitted to NVSL.

All of the infected premises have been quarantined, remaining under that status until 30 days post healing of lesions found on the infected animals.

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) is operating a public information and education campaign regarding VSV and is in the process of performing an

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Department of Homeland Security Selects New Centers of Excellence on Agro-Security

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced that Texas A&M University and the University of Minnesota have been chosen to lead two new Homeland Security Centers of Excellence (HS-Centers) on agro-security. The Department anticipates providing a total of \$33 million over the course of the next three years to address security in two key agricultural sectors —

foreign animal diseases and food security. DHS and these universities will soon begin grant negotiations to formalize their partnerships.

DHS anticipates providing Texas A&M University and its partners with \$18 million over the course of the next three years for the study of high consequence foreign animal and zoonotic diseases. Texas A&M University has assembled a team of experts from across the country, which includes partnerships with the University of Texas Medical Branch, University of California at Davis, University of Southern California and University of Maryland. Texas A&M University's HS-Center,

which will be known as the National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense, will work closely with partners in academia, industry and government to address potential threats to animal agriculture including foot-and-mouth disease, Rift Valley fever and Avian influenza. Their research on foot-and-mouth disease will be carried out in close collaboration with Homeland Security's Plum Island Animal Disease Center.

The University of Minnesota's HS-Center, known as the University Center for Post-Harvest Food Protection and Defense, will address agro-security issues related to post-harvest food protection.



Equine Health Report

Spring/Summer 2004

Publisher

National Institute for
Animal Agriculture

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Equine Health Report provides the latest information on issues pertinent to equine health initiatives, strategies, research and regulatory action. It is a communications initiative of the NIAA Equine Health Committee and is produced in cooperation with USDA-APHIS. Reprinting is encouraged.

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Senator Calls for West Nile Virus Plan

South Dakota Senator Tim Johnson says the country needs a nationally coordinated effort to control West Nile Virus. Johnson announced a National West Nile Virus Action Plan, which he would like to see developed in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute for Health.

"We must begin working on a more coordinated national response," said Johnson. "Preventive spraying techniques are simply not enough. We must look at the overall public health concerns, including a West Nile virus vaccine that would provide an additional and aggressive preventive tool to protect our citizens."

According to Johnson, the plan should establish a solid scientific base of knowledge on the



Sen. Tim Johnson

cause and prevention of West Nile, increase awareness about the virus, provide best practice guidelines for states and localities on

how to prevent, detect and treat the disease, and identify priorities for fast-track research regarding vaccine and anti-viral treatments.

As of June 1, 18 states have reported avian or animal cases of WNV, including human cases in Arizona and New Mexico, according to the CDC. More information regarding WNV is available on the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/wnv/wnv.html, or contact your state health department.

Equine Infectious Anemia Certification Program Proposed

Efforts in progress for regionalized prevention and control

Prevention and control of equine infectious anemia (EIA) hinge on a collaborative effort nationwide, according to Dr. Timothy Cordes, senior staff veterinarian for equine programs with USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services



(VS). "State and industry cooperation is the only way it's going to happen," Cordes told the National Institute for Animal Agriculture's (NIAA) Equine Health Committee at its 2004 NIAA annual meeting in April.

Currently, every state has the legal authority to at least test for EIA for interstate movement. But states vary greatly in their actual testing requirements for EIA. For example, some states have mandatory testing, some require testing at gathers or exhibition, and some require testing for change of ownership.

Toss state quarantine and epidemiology variances in the mix and you've got a lack of uniformity nationally for EIA control.

USAHA to the rescue

In September 2003, the U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA) Infectious Diseases of Horses Committee (IDOHC) developed a proposal for a new and improved EIA program. The proposal includes three major components.

First, USDA is encouraged to develop a proposal for a state EIA certification program based on a nationwide census.

"The certification status of an individual state might depend on several factors," Cordes points out, "including the case rate of positive horses over time, the percent of the horse population tested, support from the industry, specific regulations in the state and the efficiency of epidemiology and trace back capability."

The USAHA IDOHC's EIA Subcommittee has been charged with the tasks of conducting a cost/benefit analysis for the industry of such a proposed certification program, developing an economically feasible approach to an equine enumeration or census, and actually designing the specifics of a certification program. Relative to cost/benefits, in one scenario of the recently completed analysis, regionalization of control efforts could result in a savings of \$11.3 million to the horse industry from

an overall reduction in testing.

The second major element of the proposed EIA program is a three-tiered EIA laboratory testing protocol. Tier 1 would be primarily private EIA ELISA labs. Tier 2 would be state and university referral EIA labs and Tier 3 would be EIA reference labs, specifically those at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL), Ames, Iowa and the Gluck Equine Research Center at the University of Kentucky. Phase-in of the ELISA-only testing would probably be over a two year period, Cordes projects.

The third component of the new EIA program is a two-year moratorium on training new personnel to open new EIA labs. The purpose of the moratorium would be to rectify quality control issues, Cordes explains. The number of laboratories that test for EIA has basically doubled over the last ten years. In 1994 there were just under 250 EIA labs in the U.S.

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UM&R Published for Equine Viral Arteritis

On April 19, 2004, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published Uniform Methods and Rules (UM&R) for Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA). The 19-page booklet contains minimum standards for detecting, controlling and preventing EVA, as well as minimum EVA requirements for both intrastate and interstate movement of equine.

"The minimum standards and requirements represent a framework for creating a viable domestic EVA control program," says Dr. Timothy Cordes, Senior Staff Veterinarian for

Equine Programs with USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services (VS). "So the document should be considered a work in progress, rather than a final product. Modifications can be made as science and technology evolve, more experience with EVA is accrued and more resources become available."

For a copy of the UM&R for Equine Viral Arteritis, contact Dr. Cordes at Timothy.R.Cordes@aphis.usda.gov or visit APHIS on the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahps/equine/eva/ and select EVA UM&R (PDF).

EIA Proposed Certification Program

(continued from page 3)

Today there are over 500 EIA labs.

"We're adding approximately 35 new labs per year," Cordes reports from NVSL statistics.

"Although EIA prevalence is at an all-time low, laboratories continue to proliferate."

The result is that the U.S. lab training system is taxed to the max. There are more applicants for USDA APHIS VS-approved training classes than can be accommodated. As of September 2003, there were 136 applicants for the EIA

training course offered by the NVSL. Only 14 applicants came from existing EIA labs. The majority of applicants expressed the intention to start new EIA labs, despite the fact that few applications included the specific needs justification to do so.

Significant economic importance

During the thirty year period between 1972 and 2002, EIA tests and results changed dramatically. In 1972, about 100,000 tests were

run with some 3,800 positive results, (3.8 percent positive). In 2002, 2,061,636 tests were conducted with 452 positive results, (.02 percent positive).

The national seroprevalence is currently about 0.022 percent, and the horse industry continues to spend \$50 million each year to test for EIA.

"The new EIA program is being worked on diligently by the EIA subcommittee," Cordes says. "The next big step will be the presentation of the subcommittee's recommendations at USAHA's fall 2004 meeting."

Linda L. Leake

VS in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado

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area surveillance evaluation.

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services, the TAHC and the New Mexico Department of Agriculture are continuing to monitor the situation and conduct response activities in an effort to minimize trade restrictions.

Additional information on VSV is available on the Internet at

www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/fsheet_faq_notice/fs_ahvs.html

Kentucky Governor Amends VSV Restrictions

Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher issued an emergency regulation on May 27 that changes the restrictions on Texas animals entering Kentucky that were imposed because of a vesicular stomatitis (VSV). The emergency regulations will allow livestock from most of Texas to enter Kentucky under certain conditions.

Gov. Fletcher's emergency regulation amends the 1996 law that banned all livestock from states affected by VSV from entering into Kentucky.

"I have signed an order that minimizes the impact of the ban on the Kentucky livestock industry while maintaining adequate protections for Kentucky animals," Gov. Fletcher said in a press release.

Horses are still required to have a negative VSV test within 30 days preceding entry into Kentucky. Approximately 60 western Texas counties are prohibited from sending livestock to Kentucky.

EU Places Restrictions on Horses from the U.S.

The American Horse Council reported that all horses being exported from the United States to the European Union (EU) now require a negative (1:12) virus neutralization test for Vesicular Stomatitis (VSV). The test samples

must be taken within 10 days prior to export for temporary export horses, and within 21 days prior to export for those horses being permanently exported to the EU.

In accordance with EU regulations, this test requirement will remain in place until six months after the VSV outbreak. The National Center for Import and Export will provide a target date when the time comes. EU horses currently in the U.S. and scheduled to return to the EU must be able to certify they have not been on an affected premises during their time in the United States.

Currently posted equine export certificates provide for these changes.

Some pending shipments may need to be delayed for testing. No U.S. horses can be certified for entry into the EU until test results are reported.



Veneman Appoints Ron DeHaven as APHIS Administrator

John Clifford Named Veterinary Services Deputy Administrator

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced on April 9 the appointment of Dr. Ron DeHaven as administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"I am very pleased that Dr. DeHaven has accepted this appointment," Veneman said. "His leadership and management experience are valuable assets as we continue to strengthen our animal and plant protection systems."

As administrator, DeHaven will manage programs that are critical to the protection of America's livestock, plants and food supply. DeHaven replaces Bobby Acord, who retired on April 3, after almost 38 years of federal service. Acord served as administrator since November 2001.

Prior to his appointment, DeHaven served as deputy administrator of APHIS for Veterinary Services since April 2002, the nation's chief veterinary official, where he provided leadership in safeguarding animal health, most notably the management of the detection and investigation of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in a cow in Washington State in December 2003. He served as the acting associate administrator for APHIS from October 2001 through April 2002.

From 1996 to 2001, DeHaven was the deputy administrator for the Animal Care (AC) unit of APHIS, administering the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act. Before assuming the deputy administrator position,



Dr. Ron DeHaven

DeHaven was AC's western regional director in Sacramento, Calif., for seven years.

DeHaven obtained a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Purdue University in 1975 and a Masters in Business Administration from Millsaps College in Mississippi in May 1989. After graduating from veterinary school, he spent four years in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps before beginning his career with APHIS in 1979.

DeHaven lives in Crofton, Md., with his wife Nancy. They have two grown children, a daughter and a son.

Clifford Named VS Deputy Administrator

John R. Clifford, DVM, has been named deputy administrator of the veterinary services program in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"John's leadership skills and experience are a welcome addition to our management team," said APHIS administrator Ron DeHaven. "His knowledge and experience will serve the agency well as it addresses the many



Dr. John Clifford

issues related to safeguarding America's animal health."

Clifford brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his role as deputy administrator and has served in a number of key leadership positions. Since April 2002, Clifford served as VS' associate deputy administrator for national animal health and policy programs.

In this position, he led APHIS' efforts to protect, sustain and improve the productivity, marketability and health of the nation's animals, animal products and biologics, in addition to protecting the nation from the introduction of dangerous and costly pests and diseases. Before becoming associate deputy administrator Clifford served as VS' assistant deputy administrator.

Clifford also has extensive field experience. Since joining APHIS in 1985, he has served as the area veterinarian in charge of Ohio, West Virginia, Michigan and Indiana; as the national animal health monitoring system coordinator for VS in Ohio; and as the brucellosis epidemiologist and veterinary medical officer in Kentucky. He is a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association and the United States Animal Health Association.

Before he began his work with APHIS, Clifford was a private veterinarian. He received his DVM and BS degrees in Animal Science from the University of Missouri. A native of Kentucky, he currently resides in Virginia with his wife Sarah.

Equine ID Plans Presented at ID/INFO EXPO

Nearly 500 animal agriculture stakeholders gathered in Chicago in mid-May for ID/INFO EXPO 2004, facilitated by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA). The conference provided the latest input and information regarding the National Animal Identification System, as announced by Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman at the end of April.

"The evolution of the U.S. Animal Identification Plan [USAIP] is clearly moving forward, with the involvement of multiple species in a system that will help further safeguard the health of animal agriculture," said Rick Sibbel, chairman of the board for NIAA.

Key presenters from the conference included USDA Under Secretary Bill Hawks, newly appointed USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service deputy administrator for Veterinary Services Dr. John Clifford and Dr. Bret Marsh, state veterinarian for the Indiana Board of Animal Health. Also included in the presentations were a series of highly anticipated reports from species and issues working groups, which have been gathering information from their industries to give input for standards in the system. Working groups making presentations included beef, dairy, bison, equine, sheep, goat and swine, as well as the markets/processors issues sector. These presentations are available on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org/id.

The species working groups are diligently working on standards and needs within their industry. The horse industry is no exception, utilizing the American Horse Council's (AHC) Equine Identification Task Force in the development of a national equine

identification plan. The AHC's task force has since evolved into the equine industry working group. Amy Mann, director of regulatory affairs for the AHC, presented the working group's progress on the task during the meeting.

The group has worked to address a variety of issues, from defining the need for a national system to who pays for implementation. Other key issues from the group include which horses and premises need to be identified, type and housing of information recorded, number standards as well as costs needed for an effective system.

"Each individual livestock industry is unique; the common



Amy Mann

denominator is the movement of animals," said Mann. "When movement is stopped, it presents a real and significant threat to the economic well-being of our industry. That's why our industry has accepted responsibility to participate in the national identification system for livestock."

The logistics of national animal identification heavily rely on what an industry currently uses and how that can fit into the national system. The horse industry is looking at a variety of options.

"We definitely want to capitalize on current identification practices," said Mann, representing the working group. "We are moving closer to determining recommendations and making decisions."

The USDA has made animal identification a priority, with plans to implement a premises identification system this year.

Mann added, "Our group will continue to work on horse ID and technology, premises ID, movement and tracking, as well as communications."

Veneman Appoints Members to Foreign Animal Disease Advisory Committee

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman has appointed 17 members to the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases.

Appointments are for a two-year term.

Appointed were: Mr. John B. Adams, National Milk Producers Federation; Dr. Richard E. Breitmeyer, California Department of Food and Agriculture; Dr. Corrie C. Brown, University of Georgia; Commissioner Gus R. Douglass, West Virginia Department of Agriculture; Dr. Don A. Franco, National Renderers Association; Dr. Saul T. Wilson, Tuskegee University; Mr. Tobin Armstrong, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association; Mr. Richard L. Crawford, McDonald's Corporation; Dr. Robert J. Eckroade, University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Niall B. Finnegan, United States Army Veterinary Corps; Mr. James M. Niewold, pork producer; Mrs. June M. Reed, American Sheep Industry Association; Dr. Jeremiah T. Saliki, Oklahoma State University; Dr. Charles R. Sherron, National Cattlemen's Beef Association; Dr. Wesley H. Towers, Delaware state veterinarian; Mr. Fred Small; Indian Stockgrowers Association; and Dr. Carol A. Ecker, Clayview Animal Clinic.

Secretary Announces Administration Proposal for Full Funding of Ames Animal Health Complex at Construction Launch Ceremony

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman has announced that President Bush will include \$178 million in the FY 2005 budget to complete the renovation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's new National Centers for Animal Health.

"When completed, the center will become the most modern and best-equipped animal disease research facility in the world," Veneman said during remarks at the official groundbreaking ceremony for the complex on Jan. 13. "The work that is done here is a crucial link to the overall effort to protect animal agriculture."

The Ames complex is USDA's "flagship laboratory" for large animal research and diagnosis. It includes the National Animal Disease Center, operated by USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and the National Veterinary Services Laboratory and the Center for Veterinary Biologics, both operated by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. (APHIS).

"The request of \$178 million by the President would represent the final installment of the \$460 million needed to fully renovate these facilities," Veneman said. "If approved by Congress, these funds will permit us to fully complete this project by the end of 2007. We intend to use accelerated contract procedures and construction techniques to meet this schedule."

Veneman said the facility is more important than ever before in the context of recent animal disease threats. For instance, the National Veterinary Services Laboratory conducted the initial



Officials break ground at new National Centers for Animal Health in Ames, Iowa on Jan. 13. Pictured left to right: Dr. Kenneth Olson, Chairman of the Board of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture, U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman, U.S. Congressman Tom Latham, and Dr. Joseph Jen, USDA Undersecretary for Research, Education and Economics.

Photo Courtesy USDA

tests to confirm the case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, from a single cow in Washington state.

"Even though the ultimate confirmation was made in England, we had the confidence in our own experts at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in order to make an immediate announcement and respond quickly," Veneman said.

Kenneth E. Olson, then chairman of the board for the National Institute for Animal Agriculture, represented industry stakeholders at the ceremony. "It is truly a great day for animal agriculture and I offer our congratulations to USDA for reaching this milestone," he said in his remarks.

Olson said industry stakeholders have long been impressed with the work being done by USDA laboratory personnel at Ames, but held concerns about the conditions of the facilities there. He said the Secretary's announcement that proposed full funding to accelerate construction was "great news."

"It has been a long time coming, but we are very pleased to be

at the stage of groundbreaking for this facility," said Olson, noting the importance of protecting the health of U.S. livestock. "We appreciate the way that USDA, through ARS and APHIS in particular, has worked with industry to make this a reality."

When completed, Veneman said the National Centers for Animal Health would include almost one million square feet of thoroughly modern facilities that will be biosafe, energy-efficient and will provide state-of-the-art capabilities for research and diagnosis.

Olson took the opportunity in his remarks, with Veneman, Harkin and other officials listening on, to say that more needs to be done in the U.S. to improve the nation's animal disease diagnostic capabilities, beyond the Ames Center. "We look forward to continuing to partner with you to see the construction here completed and also to move forward other needed parts of the system including the national laboratory network and needed upgrades at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center."

AHC's Marvin Beeman Elected to NIAA Board of Directors

Dr. Marvin Beeman, an equine practitioner from Littleton, Colo., has been elected to the board of directors of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA). The election took place during the association's annual membership meeting on April 5 in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Dr. Marvin Beeman

Last fall, Beeman was selected to fill a vacancy on the board that occurred mid-year until the 2004 membership meeting when association members met to elect their representatives on the board. A representative of the American

Horse Council, Beeman served as chairman of the NIAA Equine Health Committee during the past two years.

"We are very fortunate to have Dr. Beeman serve on our board of directors," said NIAA President and CEO Glenn Slack. "He will be a strong advocate for the equine industry and he brings tremendous wisdom and knowledge to board deliberations on a breadth of issues affecting animal agriculture."

Beeman is a past president of the American Association of Equine Practitioners, a former member of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases, and serves on the board of directors of the American Horse Council.

Board of Directors Passes Resolutions from Equine Health Committee

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture 2004 Annual Meeting brought forth amendments to several resolutions addressing issues facing the equine industry. The newly formed Equine Health Committee addressed NIAA's positions and resolutions on a variety of issues affecting equine health.

The committee presented the board with amendments to seven resolutions/position statements. A complete listing of the NIAA's resolutions/position statements is available on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org/aboutNIAA/resolutions/2004_2005index.asp.

Peter Timoney Appointed NIAA Equine Health Committee Chair

National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) Chairman of the Board Dr. Rick Sibbel has announced the appointment



Dr. Peter Timoney

of Dr. Peter J. Timoney as chair of the association's Equine Health Committee for a two-year term.

Timoney is chair of the University of Kentucky Department of Veterinary Sciences and director of U.K.'s Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center, considered by many as the preeminent equine research center in the world. Known for his work on the pathogenesis and epidemiology of equine infectious diseases, Timoney is an internationally recognized authority on equine viral arteritis.

"Dr. Timoney brings impeccable credentials to the top leadership post of the NIAA Equine Health Committee," said Sibbel. "We are privileged to have such well-respected individuals helping guide the work of this organization."

Timoney received his Ph.D. from the University of Dublin and is a graduate of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. He has served as vice chair of the NIAA Equine Health Committee since 2002.

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