



Stock Quotes: Animal Health Newsletter

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Quarterly Newsletter from the Animal Health Bureau of the
Montana Department of Livestock

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

NILE	10/2-10/18 - Virtual
MT Farmers Union	10/30/20—Virtual
MT Farm Bureau Federation Annual Conf.	11/9-11/12—Billings
MT Stockgrowers Annual Conf.	11/16-11/18—Billings
MT Woolgrowers Annual Conf.	12/5/-12/7—Billings

WHAT'S NEW

- New Western Area Supervisor Hired, p. 6
- COVID-19 and the Swine Industry, p. 5

State Veterinarian Notes

CORONAVIRUS. Like the rest of you, we're still working through challenges posed by the coronavirus. The Department has had to scale back a variety of routine tasks while still maintaining essential activities. Essential activities include brand inspections for theft investigations and sales, inspections of eggs destined for the interstate or international market, inspecting meat establishments for safe and humane slaughter, brucellosis testing and permitting of imports. Reduction of national slaughter capacity due to packing plant closures has also had numerous impacts. Most notably, a glut of slaughter-ready swine (a species most dependent on exact timing of marketing) created welfare issues nationally. Market disruptions resulting from coronavirus have in some ways mimicked the challenges we will have to face and overcome in a rapidly spreading national scale animal disease incident. So in a way, the recent events have helped to identify issues that we need to be better prepared for in the future.

THE MONTANA VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY (MVDL) CONTINUES TO RAISE THE BAR. MVDL is now conducting Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) testing. In past years, samples collected by hunters and the Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) were sent to Colorado State University. This was not only more expensive, but also created significant delays in obtaining results for hunters who wanted to know CWD test result information prior to processing and consuming game. CWD is not known to be a risk to people, nevertheless, the Centers for Disease Control advises that positive animals should not be consumed.

In late September, we ran the first batch of CWD samples and reduced the seven to ten-day turnaround to next-day. We may not be able to maintain such rapid turnaround during rifle season when the sample volume increases dramatically, but we are confident that we will be able to report results more rapidly than was possible when using an out of state lab.

We're also making slow but steady progress on a new laboratory facility. We now have a floorplan, as well as 3D renderings of the exterior of the building; a building which now includes the Department of Agriculture's Analytical Lab. This is a recent, positive development where the MVDL would co-locate the building, and share public areas like bathrooms, waiting rooms, parking lots etc. with the Department of Agriculture. The tentative site for the new facility would be directly northeast of the current MVDL on land also owned by Montana State University. We have submitted the project into the long-range building plan (LRBP) ahead of the upcoming legislative session. The LRBP is the initial step to requesting funding for construction.

JOHNE'S TESTING. Also, more positive news regarding Johne's. Since the inception of Montana's Johne's disease control program late last summer, testing numbers are up 47%. Control of this insidious disease is paramount for Montana to maintain its position as the Nation's top source for quality seedstock (read more on Johne's on page 3).

ELECTRONIC HEALTH CERTIFICATES. Lastly, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the upcoming deadline for the transition to electronic health certificates on January 1, 2021. We have received some phone calls from veterinarians as well as a letter from the Montana Veterinary Medical Association citing concerns by Montana veterinarians not yet comfortable with computers and computer-generated forms. We empathize with the significant change in workflow that a move to electronic health certificates poses, and are committed to providing additional outreach, support, as well as offering a transition for veterinarians struggling to make the change. To that end, we are looking to commit the majority of the 2020 December newsletter to education on electronic formats, providing a "wet lab" during the MVMA winter meeting, and a phase-in for veterinarians that are on a path to complete the transition. ✕ By Martin Zaluski, DVM

WILD ANIMAL OWNERSHIP

Have you ever received a request to evaluate a wild animal, such as a skunk, raccoon, lynx, wolf, wolf-hybrid, or bat? In recent weeks, the Department of Livestock (DOL) has worked with veterinarians navigating such requests and wanted to share this information with the broader audience.

Wild species are jointly managed by the DOL, Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), and Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The focus of wildlife management by DOL and DPHHS is on the risk of rabies exposure between wildlife and people, pets, or livestock.



Figure 1. Raccoon in River
Source: http://fwp.mt.gov/news/newsReleases/fishAndWildlife/nr_0423.html

Specifically, Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 50-23-101, defines a wild animal as a skunk, fox, raccoon, or bat. MCA 50-23-103 says, whenever a person unlawfully possesses a wild animal, the Department of Public Health and Human Services or the Department of Livestock may impound the animal and take any other action considered reasonable to protect public health.

When a veterinarian is contacted by an individual requesting an evaluation of a prohibited species, we ask that you contact our office for further assistance and investigation. There are situations where an individual may be given an exemption to allow possession of the wild animal. These include: the animal is used in a fur-bearing enterprise, contained in a zoological exhibition in a manner that it may not come in physical contact with members of the public, or acquired by an educational institution for scientific research.

If the individual does not qualify for an exemption, and possesses a wild animal illegally, we would work with our enforcement division to make contact and discuss options. In recent cases involving possession of wild species, owners have been given the choice to offer the animal to a licensed wildlife facility, remove it from Montana, or have the animal euthanized.

It should be noted that if a wild animal, whether unlawfully or lawfully in the possession of a person, has bitten or otherwise ex-

posed a person to the possibility of contracting rabies, the animal may be impounded by the Department of Public Health and Human Services, the Department of Livestock, or a local health officer and either quarantined or destroyed and the animal's brain tested for rabies.

A lawfully possessed wild animal that is quarantined and found not to be rabid must be returned to its owner (MCA 50-23-102). Keeping in mind, quarantine lengths for wild animals are not well defined in scientific literature.

While the focus of MCA 50-23-103 is on prevention of rabies exposure, Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) also maintains a list of prohibited species. These species are prohibited for a variety of reasons, beyond risk of rabies transmission, primarily associated with potential harm to native species. The list can be found at the following link: <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/species/exotics/prohibited.html>.

The DOL would like to remind veterinarians to always educate clients about the rabies risks in Montana. Particularly from exposure to bats, skunks, and raccoons. The DOL recommends rabies vaccinations for all age-eligible cats, dogs, and ferrets, as well as to some non-labeled species such as wolf hybrids. Species such as wolf and lynx are not prohibited in Montana, and you may be asked to perform veterinary work for these species. These animals should be vaccinated but no rabies vaccination certificate issued. It is important to educate clients that we do not know what level of protection rabies vaccine will provide for their animals, and should they be involved in a bite or other action that results in a potential human exposure, the animals will be treated as non-vaccinated wild animals and may be ordered destroyed.

If you have any questions about rabies or possession of wild animals, you are encouraged to reach out to our office at: 406-444-2976.

✉ By Anna Forseth, DVM

JOHNES TESTING MVDL UPDATES

It has been one year since the Department of Livestock (DOL) introduced the Montana Johnes Control Program. Since then, there has been a 47% increase in Johnes testing at the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (MVDL). There were 1,700 more samples tested between August 2019 to July 2020, compared to the same period for the previous year.

DOL has conducted outreach activities to bring awareness to the program. Outreach has included submission of newsletter articles to producer organizations, breed specific cattle groups, and interviews have been published in several ag publications. The Animal Health Bureau has also sent information about the program directly to producers who have had a positive Johnes test within the past 4-5 years at MVDL.

Outreach activities are structured to emphasize the goals of the program: (1) minimize the spread of Johnes disease through animal sales and movement, (2) identify positive animals/herds and implement management practices to eliminate the disease, (3) support non-infected herds by identifying biosecurity practices to prevent the introduction of the disease into their herds, and (4) create a market opportunity for participating herds to advertise their involvement in the program.

Participating producers work with their local veterinarian to develop a herd health plan addressing biosecurity, herd testing, and management of high-risk animals. Producers then obtain a "level of certification" based on the health status of their herd, and their testing plan (whole herd testing vs. individual animal testing). Higher levels of certification suggest a herd is lower risk of being infected with the disease.

To date, thirty-nine veterinarians have completed the required online training for participation in the program. The DOL would like to thank those veterinarians for their interest and continued conversation with producers about Johnes disease management. Montana producers and buyers of Montana cattle are recognizing the importance of testing and maintaining confidence in the quality of seedstock our state has to offer. Please reach out to Dr. Anna Forseth with questions: anna.forseth@mt.gov, 406-444-2939.
 ✉ By Anna Forseth, DVM

The Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (MVDL) will be performing diagnostic testing for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) heading into the 2020 general hunting season. Currently, all CWD testing in the State of Montana is being outsourced by Fish, Wildlife and Parks to the veterinary diagnostic lab at Colorado State University. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks conducted just over 7,000 tests last year and is anticipating as many as 14,000 tests during the fall of 2020 with most of this testing projected to be performed at the MVDL. The MVDL will be offering both the ELISA screening test and the immunohistochemical montest which is used for confirmatory testing as well as regulatory testing of captive (farmed) cervids.

Also, MVDL is excited to announce that the Clinical Microbiology section has been hard at work improving and increasing our capacity. Using additional biochemical tests, we can now differentiate between *Moraxella bovis* and *Moraxella bovoculi* in house. We have also increased our capacity for culturing and identifying anaerobic organisms from clinical samples, including *Fusobacterium* sp. and *Clostridium* sp. We look forward to continuously improving and expanding the services offered to our clients and adding more testing modalities in the future. If there are diagnostic tests that you would like to see the MVDL perform, please don't hesitate to reach out to the lab by calling (406)-994-4885 or sending an email to mvd@mt.gov and we will do our best to see if we can provide those services.

The MVDL is also pleased to announce the addition of Daniel Arenas and Brian Eilers to our dedicated team of diagnostic lab technicians. Both Daniel and Brian are graduates of Montana State University and have Master of Science degrees in Chemistry and Biology, respectively. Prior to attending graduate school at MSU, Daniel worked as a staff scientist at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia. He has joined the Molecular Diagnostics lab section at MVDL. Brian graduated from MSU in 2003 and has worked in multiple labs in the MSU Chemistry Department over the past 17 years. Brian has joined the MVDL Virology lab section. We are extremely excited about the addition of these talented employees to our already exceptional staff. ✉ By Greg Juda, Ph.D.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH CERTIFICATES

As the January 1, 2021 deadline for transitioning to electronic Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (eCVI) inches closer, the Department of Livestock wants to ensure that veterinarians are prepared and have the needed support to successfully make the transition.

There are several available technologies for veterinarians to issue eCVIs, including two new options that we expect to see go live in 2021 (see Table 2). As a minimum, we recommend that all veterinarians sign up for and become familiar with the fillable PDF eCVI. This option is free to use and can be issued in the field without internet connection. The PDF eCVI is best for small numbers of animals or large uniform groups of animals that do not require individual ID to be listed on the eCVI.

For large groups of cattle with diverse identification, two options exist:

1. Addendums to eCVIs. A separate electronic document that is transmitted with the eCVI, may include information such as official identification numbers, breed, age, sex, individual test or vaccine information. For addendums to be accepted, the following conditions must be followed:

- a. The CVI must reference the number of addendum pages, with the CVI itself being page 1 (1 of 3).
- b. The addendum must be numbered accordingly (2 of 3, 3 of 3, etc.).
- c. The CVI number must be documented on each

page of the addendum.

- d. Addendums should be sent electronically to the department at eCVI@mt.gov as either excel, comma delimited (CSV), or other spreadsheet files with the CVI number as the subject of the email.

2. Use of an eCVI technology that allows the upload of official identification into the body of the CVI (see Table 3). This also requires that official identification numbers are in an excel or CSV format. Individual eCVI technologies will have specific formats for files to be uploaded. Please review guidance specific to the product you are using. The Department is happy to help if you still have questions or need assistance.

With the proposed transition to RFID tags on hold, cattle will continue to move interstate with visual official ID. Visual ID can be recorded electronically chute side or can be handwritten and later entered into a spreadsheet format. RFID tags can be scanned using an electronic RFID reader and tag lists downloaded from the reader for inclusion on eCVIs, test charts, or vaccination certificates.

Look for additional information in the coming months, including options for phased in use of eCVIs and a session on the use of eCVIs at the Montana Veterinary Medical Association Winter Meeting. If you need additional help or guidance as you make the transition, please contact Dr. Tahnee Szymanski at tszymanski@mt.gov or (406) 444-5214. ☒ By Tahnee Szymanski, DVM

Product	Cost	Hardware	Internet required to issue?	Large or small animal CVI?	Able to upload ID list?	Coggins?
Fillable PDF eCVI	Free	PC	No	Both	No	No
AgView	Fee based	PC, tablet, phone	No	Both	Yes	No
VSPS/VEHCS	Free	PC	Yes	Large	Yes	Yes
Vet Sentry	Fee based	PC	Yes	Both	?	No
Global Vet Link	Fee based	PC	Yes	Both	Yes	Yes
Fort Supply	Fee based	PC	Yes	Large	Yes	No
USDA MIMS eCVI (in development)	Free	TBD	No	Large	Yes	TBD
USAHerds state eCVI (in development)	Free	TBD	No	Both	Yes	TBD

Table 2. eCVI Options. Source: DOL

IMPACT of COVID-19 in the SWINE INDUSTRY

2020 has been an active year for the Department of Livestock (DOL) on the emergency preparedness front. Due in large part to COVID-19, the livestock industry has been presented with unanticipated challenges in recent months. While COVID-19 has seemingly taken our eyes directly off preparedness for a foreign animal disease outbreak, State Animal Health Officials will agree that there are many “lessons learned” from this situation that should influence our preparedness efforts moving forward.

Beginning in April 2020, many large swine packing plants temporarily shut down production following the diagnosis of COVID-19 in plant employees. These closures would go on to cause huge waves throughout the industry. The swine sector is a just-in-time industry that relies on consistency and in many cases, runs on a pre-determined timeline from breeding to slaughter. When a packing plant is unable to take finished pigs from a producer, that producer is unable to receive the next group of weaned pigs on time. When weaned pigs on a sow farm have nowhere to go, the sow farm struggles to manage the backup of piglets that have been weaned, as well as sows that are quickly due-to-farrow. This situation turns to a welfare issue for producers very fast, within days to weeks.

At the maximum level of disruption, 40% of the nation's packing plant capacity was idle. Prior to COVID-19, the U.S. was harvesting over a half a million pigs each day. When 200,000 animals that were supposed to go to slaughter each day cannot, the situation escalates quickly. The disruption and subsequent back up of slaughter ready pigs becomes more difficult to resolve, with each day. Many actions were taken by the industry to try and mitigate the backup and only as a last resort was euthanasia considered. In particular, producers attempted to slow the growth rate of pigs destined for slaughter by altering the nutritional composition of their feed. In some cases however, producers were faced with only one remaining option, to euthanize their pigs.

Euthanasia was ultimately elected to (1) control the number of animals in the system and (2) address welfare concerns. Recent euthanasia events have been carried out in multiple ways. For example, sows have been aborted, percentages of recently farrowed piglets have been euthanized to decrease the total number of pigs weaned, weaned pigs arriving at finishing barns have been euthanized to decrease the number of animals sent to market, and in some cases, whole barns of pigs have been euthanized.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has defined depopulation as the rapid and efficient destruction of a complete population of animals in response to urgent circumstances with as much consideration given to the welfare of the animals as practicable. Of the “conditions necessitating depopulation”, market disruption is listed. This includes any eventuality that reduces or eliminates the marketability of swine which could have a negative impact on animal welfare in a short period due to the limited flexibility in the current

marketing channel.

The AVMA's preferred depopulation methods include: gunshot, nonpenetrating/penetrating captive bolt, electrocution, manual blunt force trauma, movement to slaughter, carbon dioxide and anesthetic overdose. Depopulation methods permitted in constrained circumstances include ventilation shutdown plus, sodium nitrite or injectable anesthetics and euthanasia agents.

Many of the above depopulation methods were utilized in response to the recent packing plant shutdowns. There are multiple factors to be considered that influence the method selected. More information about the pros and cons of the various euthanasia methods can be found on the American Association of Swine Veterinarians website: <https://www.aasv.org/Resources/publichealth/covid19/index.php#crisis>.



Figure 3 Piglets. Source: National Pork Board (NPB)

Currently, the packing plant slaughter capacity has rebounded to 95% of its pre-COVID numbers. This is expected to be as high as the rebound will go, due to social distancing

modifications implemented at packing plants. As of late July, it was estimated that 2 million hogs were still backed up. That number is expected to increase to 2.5 million by the end of the year. This situation is and will continue to be a concern for the foreseeable future.

While not an animal disease issue, the events that have occurred over the past six months are very similar to those expected during a foreign animal disease outbreak. The DOL will continue to stay engaged and will continue working hard to advance our state's preparedness and response capabilities.

α By Anna Forseth, DVM

EMPLOYEE CORNER

WESTERN AREA SUPERVISOR

The department is excited to announce that Dan Bugni has been hired as the new Western Area Supervisor. This position is a half brands and half animal health enforcement position.

Dan has been with the Department for 24 years in multiple roles. He has served as a Brand Inspector, Market Supervisor, and District Investigator in multiple locations. Most recently, he has served as the District Investigator/Market Supervisor in Dillon.

Dan brings a high level of professionalism, extensive knowledge of law enforcement, and a wealth of experience in animal health issues to include brucellosis and DSA regulations. We are confident that he will be a great asset to both Brands and Animal Health.

You may encounter Dan or work with him on import quarantines, brucellosis management, alternative livestock, or other regulatory disease issues. Dan supervises seven District Investigators on the Western side of the state. Both he and the group he supervises are valuable resources for administration of our state's

animal health regulations. If you are not familiar with the District Investigator in your area, you can find their contact information on our website at: <http://liv.mt.gov/Brands-Enforcement/Find-A-Brand-Inspector>.

Welcome Dan! ✂ By Tahnee Szymanski, DVM



Figure 4. Dan Bugni Source: DOL Stock Photo

Animal Health Contact Information:

Marty Zaluski, DVM
State Veterinarian, Administrator
(406) 444-2043
mzaluski@mt.gov

Tahnee Szymanski, DVM
Assistant State Veterinarian
(406) 444-5214
tszymanski@mt.gov

Eric Liska, DVM
Brucellosis Program Veterinarian
(406) 444-3374
eliska@mt.gov

Anna Forseth, DVM
Program Veterinarian
(406) 444-2939
anna.forseth@mt.gov

Brooke Ruffier
Alternative Livestock
(406) 444-5214
bruffier@mt.gov

Import Permit Office
(406) 444-2976

We're on the Web:
www.liv.mt.gov



Animal Health Division
P.O. Box 202001
Helena, MT, 59620-2001
Return Service Requested
Phone: 406-444-2043
Import line: 406-444-2976
Fax: 406-444-1929

Montana Department
of Livestock