

Animal Health Monitor

JULY 2017

Volume 9, Issue 2



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- ⇒ Small Flock Poultry Biosecurity Assessment and Salmonella Testing Project 2017
- ⇒ Reovirus in Broiler Chickens
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A Veterinarian's Duty to Report an Animal in Distress by Dr. Jane Pritchard

Recently a CVMA position statement on the Responsibility of Veterinary Professionals in Addressing Animal Abuse and Neglect was shared with members, and the CVBC released a Position on Veterinarians' Duty to Report to the BCSPCA.

In reading both of these, I felt they reflected two quite different roles for veterinarians.

For reference, the BC Prevention of Cruelty Act (PCA) states:

"22.1 A registered veterinarian who believes on reasonable grounds that a person responsible for an animal is, or is likely, causing or permitting the animal to be in distress in contravention of this Act must promptly report, to the best of the registered veterinarian's knowledge and belief, all of the following information to an authorized agent:

(a) the reason for believing that an animal is in distress;

(b) sufficient information to contact the person responsible for the animal, including the person's name and address;

(c) sufficient information to identify the animal."

The Veterinarian's Oath includes a commitment to the protection of animal health and welfare as well as the

prevention and relief of animal suffering. *"I will strive to promote animal health and welfare, relieve animal suffering....."*

There are provisions to protect 'whistle-blower' veterinarians within the PCA.

As veterinarians, we are educated to recognize animals suffering and trained how to alleviate it. Based on this, it seems reasonable that veterinarians should be a first line of defense against animal suffering, and the public should be assured we are engaged in this area.

The CVBC memo focused on the role for veterinarians to protect client confidentiality in face of possible animal abuse. The emphasis on protecting client confidentiality to defend not reporting animal cruelty seems to me to be less than professional within the context of our oath and the requirements of the PCA. In BC we have witnessed high profile media coverage and public outrage on extreme acts of cruelty against farm animals in recent months and years. The public often questions what the role of the veterinarian is in these circumstances, and if we do not speak up, take an interest, ask questions and become engaged in this area, I fear we, as veterinarians will be



seen as irrelevant in protecting animal welfare. I feel that veterinarians need to remain relevant in animal welfare that we should actively continue to *"strive to promote animal health and welfare, relieve animal suffering"*.

I fully support the CVMA position that we have an ethical obligation to address suspected animal abuse or neglect by reporting it appropriately. Many social service agencies recognize that animal welfare issues may be reflective of human abuse within a household or farm. By not reporting animal suffering, veterinarians may be contributing to the client not receiving the mental health support they need.

I have always felt that animal welfare was part of my job, no matter what job I was in as a veterinarian.

BC Equine Disease Surveillance Report by Dr. Ann Britton

Last year, the Animal Health Centre (AHC) created a page on our website devoted to reporting disease detection in BC horses. The page confidentially reports reportable and notifiable diseases that have been detected in BC. Reportable and notifiable diseases are prescribed by the *Animal Health Act* and require immediate reporting of a diagnosis to the Chief Veterinary Officer of British Columbia (CVOBC). The webpage has a link to the CVOBC for this purpose. Upon receiving a report, the CVOBC will take appropriate steps as legislated in the Act and will also instruct the webpage manager to post the detection to the surveillance report. The manager will also send an email alert to all those who wish to subscribe to the service.

The BC Equine Disease Surveillance Report was created at the request of equine veterinarians and horse-owners in BC. To be successful, the report will need the full participation of the equine industry. To this end, veterinarians, veterinary diagnosticians and horse-owners are asked to familiarize themselves with the reportable and notifiable diseases below and the reporting procedure to CVOBC. Definition of reportable and notifiable diseases and a list of these diseases can be viewed below. Some of the diseases on the list may surprise you, so it would be advisable to take a look.

Some diseases of interest to the equine industry are not reportable or notifiable, for example Strangles. The BC Equine Disease Surveillance Report will also report confirmed diseases of interest on the webpage and via the email alert. If a disease of interest such as Strangles is diagnosed and you want

to post this detection on the report, please call Dr. Ann Britton at 1-800-661-9903 or email at Ann.P.Britton@gov.bc.ca with the details. If the diagnosis meets our case definition, the case will be posted.

**Please note that confidentiality is taken very seriously by the AHC and this will be maintained in the report. The manager will ensure that useful information regarding location will be communicated in the report without compromising case confidentiality. Disease location information to be communicated will be assessed by the manager on a case by case basis and may entail significant expansion of the affected area in order to maintain confidentiality.

Definitions of reportable and notifiable diseases as taken from the *Animal Health Act*:

“Reportable disease means an environmental toxin, infestation, syndrome or transmissible disease that is prescribed as a reportable disease for the purpose of implementing preventive, control or eradication measures (a) to safeguard animal health, (b) to safeguard public health in relation to environmental toxins, infestations, syndromes or transmissible diseases that are or may be transmissible from animals to humans, (c) to avoid barriers to trade, or (d) for other reasons in the public interest.”

“Notifiable disease means an environmental toxin, infestation, syndrome or transmissible disease that is prescribed as a notifiable disease for the purpose of implementing monitoring measures (a) to determine its presence, identity,

nature, effects or spread, (b) to avoid barriers to trade, or (c) for other reasons in the public interest.”

Reportable Diseases

- Equine Infectious Anemia
- Eastern, Western and Venezuelan Equine Encephalomyelitis
- Rabies
- Vesicular Stomatitis
- African Horse Sickness
- Contagious Equine Metritis
- Equine Piroplasmiasis caused by *Babesia caballi* or *Theileria equi*

Notifiable Diseases

- West Nile Virus
- Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy
- Equine Rhinopneumonitis
- Equine Viral Arteritis
- *Salmonella* Dublin
- *Salmonella* Enteritidis
- *Salmonella* Heidelberg
- *Salmonella* Typhimurium
- Anaplasmosis

Link to the BC Equine Disease Surveillance Report: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/animal-health/reportable-notifiable-diseases/equine-disease-report>

To have your name added to the email alert, please contact Dr. Ann Britton.

Sheep and Goat Welfare Workshops by Dr. Glenna McGregor and Lori Vickers

Thank you to everyone who came out to one of our six “Keeping Flocks Healthy Workshops for Sheep and Goats” around the province over the past year!



Funding for this project has been provided by the Governments of Canada and British Columbia through *Growing Forward 2*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

From September 2016 to March 2017, Dr. Glenna McGregor, Veterinary Pathologist, and myself, Lori Vickers, Regional Agrologist, hosted workshops in Cranbrook, Penticton, Kamloops, Abbotsford, Ladysmith and Quesnel. In total, we had over 190 participants come out and engage with us. In most locations, we also had a Ministry of Agriculture Regional Agrologist out, so participants could connect with their local agrologist.

During these workshops, we discussed various topics relevant to small flock owners including: nutrition, biosecurity, trace-ability (ear tagging requirements), disease and parasite management, and in bighorn sheep habitat, risk of disease transfer between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep.

In addition to having a comprehensive discussion about disease and parasite management, Dr. Glenna McGregor

walked us through services available to sheep and goat producers through the Animal Health Centre, located in Abbotsford. Staff veterinarians and laboratory scientists at the Animal Health Centre investigate and identify major livestock and companion animal diseases that could have potentially devastating effects. Laboratory sections include bacteriology, histopathology, molecular diagnostic, pathology (necropsy), serology, toxicology and virology.

Lori Vickers discussed the importance of balanced nutrition when raising sheep and goats, as well as various programs run by the Ministry of Agriculture. Participants were pointed to various sources of funding available to them through the Ministry of Agriculture, including Livestock Tag Reader Rebates, On-Farm Food Safety and Traceability, Business Planning and Environmental Farm Plans. For more information, visit www.gov.bc.ca/agriservicebc or get in touch with your local Regional Agrologist!

The workshops were a great success with the vast majority of participants telling us that they felt the information that was provided would help them to better manage their flocks and herds.

As a result, we decided to continue and offer the workshops into 2017/2018. This time we will be hosting four



workshops around the province – in the north Okanagan, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island and in the north. Stay tuned for more details, dates and locations. For more information, please contact Dr. Glenna McGregor at 604-556-3124 or Lori Vickers at 250-787-3241.

Upcoming Locations

North Okanagan Fraser Valley

Vancouver Island Smithers

Topics

- * *Nutrition*
- * *Biosecurity*
- * *Traceability*
- * *Disease and Parasite Management*

Small Flock Poultry Biosecurity Assessment and Salmonella Testing Project 2017 by Satvir Pandher

Raising small poultry flocks differs from regulated commercial poultry production in bird breed and source, housing, handling and disease prevention and biosecurity strategies. The BC Ministry of Agriculture provides training for small flock owners through its “Keeping Your Flock Healthy” workshops supported by *Growing Forward 2*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative, but participants have asked for more practical biosecurity guidelines. A key objective of this project is to better understand the range of current small flock biosecurity practices in order to provide better advice to owners.



Salmonella is a food safety concern. Over the last five years there have been an increasing number of people becoming ill with *Salmonella* Enteritidis. In 2015, a serious outbreak was associated with chicks and poults purchased from a popular mail-order hatchery. *Salmonella* rarely causes illness in infected birds. Detection of *Salmonella* in a flock requires regular testing of the birds’ environment. A second objective of this study is to improve the testing protocols for *Salmonella* in small flocks.

Each participant will receive individual feedback from findings from their farm. Individual information will be held in confidence in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. A summary of all findings compiled together will be used to make general recommendations.

COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECT

The Project is seeking 50 small flock poultry owners to participate in the Biosecurity Assessment and *Salmonella* Testing Project. Each participant will be provided the following services at no cost:

Personalized Biosecurity Assessment

- The project manager will visit your farm and perform a biosecurity assessment using the “protectmyflock” tool. You will answer a series of questions specific to your poultry flock and you will receive a personalized assessment of your biosecurity practices, highlighting areas that can be improved. **Estimated time: 2 hrs.**

Salmonella Testing

- A *Salmonella* testing kit will be sent to participants prior to their on-site visit. The poultry owner will follow the kit’s instructions and collect samples in their small flock poultry environment approximately an hour before the on-site visit. **Estimated time: 30min.** The visiting project manager will take additional samples and all samples will be analyzed by the Animal Health Centre. A final report and discussion of the findings will be provided to the participant once the results are received.

Biosecurity Kit—contains 13 different items to assist your small flock’s biosecurity

- Contains a bio-suit, a boot brush, a biosecurity sign, disinfectant and many more items!

Opportunity to be added to a small flock email list

- Keep up to date with small flock events and workshops
- Receive disease outbreak related information for your area

PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT

All small flock poultry owners that met the following criteria were encouraged to participate:

- Flock of 10-99 hens
- Located in B.C.
- Have completed the screening survey
- Allocated 2.5hrs of time for the on-site assessment and *Salmonella* sampling

Registration for the project has ended. Those who have signed up have been contacted and invited to do an on-line screening survey.



Recent Improvements in the Animal Health Centre's Quality Management System by Dr. Tomy Joseph

An essential requirement for a laboratory to become accredited is to have a documented quality management system. The Animal Health Centre (AHC) is accredited by three different accreditation bodies, namely the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD), Standards Council of Canada (SCC - ISO 17025) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for the various veterinary diagnostic testing services it offers. AHC has a mature quality management system that is thoroughly re-evaluated regularly by these accreditation bodies to ensure continued technical competence and compliance with the accreditation standards and requirements. AHC's quality management system ensures that laboratory test results meet customer's expectations and are accurate and validated.

An effective and user friendly document control and document management system is the backbone of a good quality management system. AHC's document management system controls and manages about 900 documents including standard operating procedures (SOPs), forms, manuals, standards etc. to comply with the accreditations standards. Earlier this year, the AHC's quality management system has taken a major step forward by implementing an electronic document management system (EDMS) for document control and document management. The AHC's EDMS is a fully web-based software program with secure access that manages the creation, storage, sharing and control of documents electronically.

Use of an EDMS has several advantages. Better version control is one of them. The EDMS has a built-in version

control which allows automatic document versioning and ensures that full document history is easily available. The EDMS eliminates the need to distribute draft documents via email and allows everyone to work on the same single document within the EDMS, thus minimizing problems associated with multiple copies of documents. EDMS also facilitates our understanding where a document is at in the authoring, review, approval and publishing process. Because EDMS centralizes the creation and management of documents in one location, it provides reliable backups and ensures easy retrieval of all documents when necessary. Processing, storage and retrieval of documents have been significantly improved with the implementation of the EDMS. As reading records of employees are electronically documented within the EDMS, it has reduced the need for maintaining paper-based records and facilitated real-time monitoring and traceability. The AHC's EDMS also provides all the technical controls such as audit trails, backups and security to be compliant with our accreditation standards. Additionally, the web-based software program affords users the ability to access files and documents anywhere, anytime, regardless of the devices they use, which is particularly convenient for employees who are on the go or located remotely. The AHC is currently implementing an electronic equipment management system for facilitating the management of laboratory equipment as well.

Implementation of EDMS and electronic equipment management systems underscore AHC's commitment to continuous improvement of its quality management system to meet or exceed customer's demands and expectations as well as accreditation standards.

New Test: Quantitative Fecal Egg Counts by Dr. Glenna McGregor

The Animal Health Centre is pleased to offer Quantitative Fecal Egg Counts using the Modified Master technique. This provides a quantitative assessment of the number of parasite (strongylids and ascarids) eggs per gram of feces. This method is widely accepted as the preferred fecal parasite analysis for sheep and goats as it allows more accurate assessment of worm burden. The greater accuracy allows more strategic targeting of deworming and more accurate monitoring of dewormer efficacy, which are both extremely important in the face of rising anthelmintic resistance. Quantitative Fecal Egg Counts may also be useful in some situations for horses and young cattle. Unless otherwise requested, quantitative fecal egg counts will be performed on all sheep and goat fecal samples submitted for parasitology. The routine fecal floatation (a qualitative test) will continue to be performed on all other species unless a Quantitative Fecal Egg count is specifically requested. The cost of the Quantitative Fecal Egg Count is \$27 per sample plus tax.

Reovirus in Broiler Chickens by Dr. Tony Redford

Over the past few months, there has been a striking increase in the number of cases of tenosynovitis and arthritis caused by reovirus infection in broiler chickens in the Fraser Valley. Reovirus has also been implicated in a malabsorption and stunting syndrome in broiler chickens due to pancreatic damage and atrophy. Typical clinical signs of reovirus infection may include severe lameness, poor feed conversion, poor flock uniformity, unthriftiness, reduced weight gains and mortality. Necropsy lesions and clinical signs of reoviral tenosynovitis can look similar to septic bacterial arthritis, which is the primary differential diagnosis. Normally, sporadic cases of reovirus occur throughout the year.

The current cluster of viral arthritis/tenosynovitis and lameness due to reovirus in BC has been occurring simultaneously with a similar outbreak of cases in the USA. This rise of cases in the USA has been associated with a variant strain of reovirus, and further characterization of reovirus isolates from broilers in BC has shown similar strains. The increase in prevalence of disease is likely related to lack of cross-protection from the strains included in current vaccines, as no commercial vaccines are available for the variant virus. Production of autogenous vaccines using the variant virus for use in parent stock has potential for prevention, but time for development is extensive.

Unfortunately, there are no treatments for reoviral infection, and severely affected birds should be humanely euthanized. Poultry veterinarians in the region will continue to work with broiler chicken producers to manage this disease through a multi-faceted approach. Biosecurity protocols and the proper cleaning/disinfection of barns before the next chick placement are important in preventing infection. The following actions are recommended:

- Prompt disposal of manure (hauled away)
- Proper mortality disposal (incineration is preferred)
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting (thermo fogging is recommended)
- Enhanced biosecurity measures



Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act Resources

On May 4, 2017 the *Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act* (GSDOA) became law, providing legal exemptions to those who call 911 to seek help for the victim of a drug overdose. Research on similar legislation in the United States indicates that Good Samaritan laws require public awareness in order to be effective. As opioid overdoses claim the lives of thousands of Canadians without discrimination, awareness among all Canadians of the protections provided by the *Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act* is crucial.

To increase awareness of the protections offered by the *Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act*, Health Canada has developed, "S.O.S. Call 911," a printable poster for local and community health organizations. There are two versions of the poster: one that directs the witnesses to call 911, and

another that allows regions without 911 service to enter the local emergency phone number. Both posters are available in English and French from Canada.ca/opioids, which also has information for the public on various key topics related to the opioid crisis and federal actions to protect Canadians.

Most drug overdoses happen in front of others, but fewer than half of witnesses call 911 out of fear of arrest or other legal consequences. By raising awareness of the legal exemptions and protections afforded to witnesses who seek help during an overdose, we can all help save lives.

Please feel free to share these resources with your respective networks.

Calendar of Events

“AMERICAN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY PATHOLOGISTS (ACVP) ANNUAL MEETING”

November 4-8, 2017 at the Vancouver Convention Center (<https://www.acvp.org/~acvp0906/index.php/en/2014-11-07-21-58-13/2017-annual-meeting>).

“KEEPING YOUR SHEEP & GOATS HEALTHY WORKSHOPS”

Sessions will focus on basic nutrition, biosecurity, and disease and parasite management related to small flock sheep and goat production. Planned locations: Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island, Smithers and the North Okanagan. Dates are currently not available. For more information contact: Glenna.McGregor@gov.bc.ca or Lori.Vickers@gov.bc.ca



“SMALL FLOCK POULTRY WORKSHOPS”

Sessions will focus on health, disease detection and biosecurity related to small lot poultry production. Dates and locations currently not available. For more information, contact Clayton.Botkin@gov.bc.ca or Victoria.Bowes@gov.bc.ca



Canada-Wide Veterinarian Wellness Survey

The Ontario Veterinary College is studying veterinarian mental wellness. Please complete a short on-line survey to help them understand the impacts of veterinary medicine on your health. The survey is completely anonymous. It will take approximately 20 minutes and will provide the veterinary community with important information on the health of our profession. In appreciation of your participation, you can choose to be entered into 5 draws for \$400.

Link to survey: https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eEVuxd5AnoEO0QJ



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<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/animal-health/animal-health-centre/newsletter>

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