



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES

Updates from the State Veterinarian's Office Spring 2020



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I'm writing this annual note to Virginia veterinarians and producers from a different location this year – my makeshift vet clinic at a Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Afghanistan. I am currently deployed here with the Army Reserve, where I serve as a Veterinary Corps Officer. As was the case when the Vet Corps was formally established in 1916, we are still very involved in food inspection activities, although now with much more than just meat inspection. We now also provide veterinary care for the many military working dogs used in military operations, including dogs trained in patrol activities as well as in explosives and drug detection. A third area that veterinarians in the Army Veterinary Corps engage in is stability operations, where veterinarians work with the local population in a country to help stabilize the economy (and thus reduce the likelihood of violent activities) through support to livestock producers and animal health professionals, although that is not currently part of our mission in Afghanistan.



I'm sometimes asked why I serve as a reservist with the Army Veterinary Corps. It is not always easy balancing the demands of my regular job with my Army duties, in addition to home and family responsibilities. And while the Army is supportive of reservists' civilian jobs and family life, the time demands are sometimes more than the minimum expectation of one weekend a month and two weeks a year. I am proud to serve but when I was told that I would be deployed from October 2019 through April 2020, I still felt terribly guilty to inform my bosses of my prolonged absence. I take my job as State Veterinarian very seriously, and if it weren't for such great colleagues that take care of Virginia animal health issues in my absence, I would have had serious concerns

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ASIAN LONGHORNED TICK (ALT) UPDATE

On May 14, 2018 the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa confirmed the finding of the *Haemaphysalis longicornis* tick (otherwise known as the East Asian or Longhorned tick) in Virginia. Up until the fall of 2017, *H. longicornis* was believed to be absent from the United States (U.S.). Originally from northeast Asia, *H. longicornis* was first found in the U.S. in New Jersey in the fall of 2017, and has now been identified in twelve states and 30 localities in Virginia. The tick has been found on numerous domestic animals and wildlife. Considering the presence of the tick in such a wide geographic area, as well as being found on wildlife, means that unfortunately, the tick is here to stay.

Depending on the geographical location, *H. longicornis* can be either parthenogenetic, bisexual, or both, meaning the females may or may not require a male for reproductive purposes. For this reason, females greatly outnumber males, which are extremely rare. The Longhorned tick looks very similar to native ticks to the naked eye, but entomologists tell us that *H. longicornis* adults can be identified under magnification by their short capitulum, inornate scutum with festoons, dark brown coloring and small size, sometimes described as small as a poppy seed, with nymphs being even smaller.

In other countries *H. longicornis* is associated with the transmission of numerous bacteria, viruses and protozoa of both veterinary and human health concern. In New Zealand and Australia, *H. longicornis* is mostly associated with bovine theileriosis (*Theileria orientalis*), a disease of cattle with potential economic consequences. In December of 2017, *T. orientalis* was identified on a farm in Virginia where *H. longicornis* was later found. While the direct relationship between *H. longicornis* and *T. orientalis* has not yet been confirmed in the U.S., the causal relationship in other countries is certainly cause for concern. Theileriosis often mimics anaplasmosis, and clinical signs of fever, anemia and anorexia are common.

Dr. Kevin Lahmers, at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine (VMCVM), has developed a validated PCR test for *T. orientalis*. VDACS staff

is



assisting Dr. Lahmers in performing a prevalence study for *T. orientalis* in VA. Of the samples collected, Dr. Lahmers has indicated that about 6 percent of the samples are positive for anaplasmosis and 3 percent for *T. orientalis*. Unfortunately, experts do not yet understand the significance of a *T. orientalis* finding. Concurrently, research is ongoing to test for pathogens in the ticks themselves and to investigate any resistance to common parasiticides. At this time, no pathogens have been identified and the ticks appear to be killed with commonly used products.

The take-home message is that the ALT and *T. orientalis* are here to stay. If considering an anaplasmosis diagnosis, please contact Dr. Lahmers at VMCVM for further information on *T. orientalis*. *T. orientalis* anaplasmosis testing is \$44 for duplex qPCR. Dr. Lahmers can be reached at klahmers@vt.edu.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Veterinary Services.

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER UPDATE

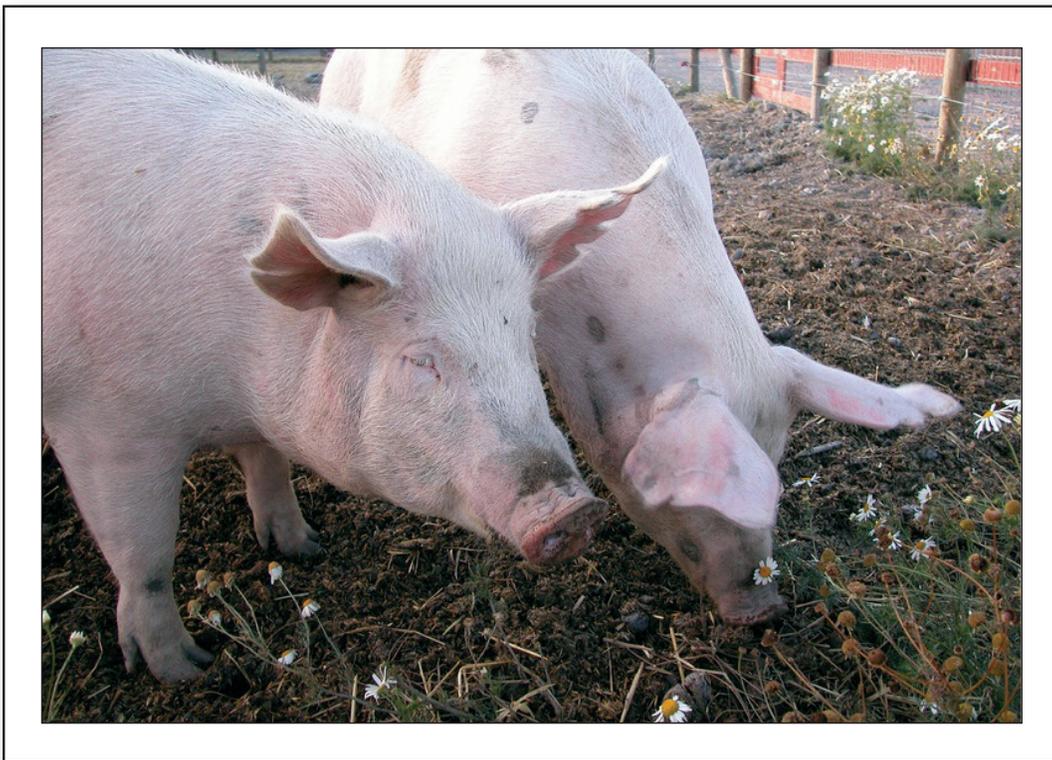
In August 2018 China reported their first African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak. The swine industry in the United States (U.S.) has been coordinating with industry and government groups to address the ASF outbreak and to plan for an industry response if ASF is ever confirmed in the U.S. Groups such as the National Pork Board, National Pork Producers Council, American Association of Swine Veterinarians, North American Meat Institute, United States Animal Health Association, Customs and Border Protection and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are all coordinating under a national response strategy for ASF developed by USDA Veterinary Services. Industry and government agencies have conducted both local and multi-state tabletop exercises to practice methods and procedures that will be used in the event of an outbreak, as well as to identify weaknesses and areas that need improvement. Virginia Cooperative Extension, Department of Environmental Quality and VDACS have been working with Smithfield Farms to develop composting methods suitable for large-scale swine depopulation.

In China, ASF spread rapidly because of poor biosecurity and unsafe carcass disposal. It has spread relatively easily to other far east countries via contaminated pork products even in the face of increased security. In

Europe, ASF has spread westward from Russia primarily in the wild boar population. Thus far, outbreaks in European domestic hogs has been limited to outdoor housing systems which allow contact with feral and wild swine.

The risk of ASF entering the U.S. is real. The highest risk of virus entry is from illegal import of pork products and byproducts from people entering the U.S. ASF virus remains viable in cured or frozen pork products and can be carried on clothes and shoes. ASF virus can remain infectious in pig feces for two weeks at 40 degrees F. The U.S. has increased surveillance of international travelers and baggage at ports of entry, and are targeting international travelers with a history of visiting hog farms or traveling with pork products from infected countries. There is also a risk of legal entry through large volumes of feedstuffs, as soybeans, meat and bone meal and other by-products are imported from countries with ASF. It is unknown if rendering and other manufacturing processes completely inactivate ASF virus.

Private practice veterinarians are our first line of defense. They will be the first on the farm, the first to field questions and the first to hear comments. Practitioners need to stress biosecurity and educate their clients about ASF.



UPDATE ON ELECTRONIC CVI (ECVI) APPLICATIONS

Interstate Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (ICVI), commonly referred to as health papers, continue to be an important tool in documenting livestock movements between states. Health papers are required for the movement of all livestock species across state lines and are increasingly requested for animals attending shows and sales within the Commonwealth. ICVIs certify the health status of animals, document any required tests and are important sources of animal identification used for disease traceability. Only federally-accredited veterinarians are approved to write health papers, and moving animals across state lines without official documentation violates both state and federal statutes.

Fortunately, several web-based applications have been developed and made available to veterinarians to create electronic CVIs (eCVI) that provide required information to state officials in a timely manner and in many cases facilitate the movement of livestock in interstate commerce.

AGVIEW

<https://agview.com/login>

An application (app) developed by the International Institute for Animal Diseases at Texas A&M University is available on mobile phones, tablets and web browser devices. The app can be downloaded from the Apple and Google Play online stores at no cost, but each CVI created costs \$3.00. Most importantly, data is automatically shared with animal health officials in origin and destination states.

GLOBAL VETLINK (GVL)

<https://www.globalvetlink.com/products/healthlink>

Global VetLink has been around for several years and has recently improved its online digital CVI service. Creating a CVI costs \$5.00 and data is automatically sent to animal health officials in origin and destination states.

VIRGINIA ANIMAL ENTRY PERMIT SYSTEM (only for importing cattle to Virginia)

<https://www.statevet.com>

As of June 2019, an electronic entry permit or approved eCVI is required for all cattle entering Virginia. In addition to the approved eCVI applications discussed here, the Office of Veterinary Services has developed a web-based animal entry permit system that is available to accredited veterinarians 24/7 at no cost. Veterinarians must sign up for an account and be approved by VDACS before accessing the ePermit system.

VETERINARY SERVICES PROCESS STREAMLINING (VSPS)

<https://vsapps.aphis.usda.gov/vsps/>

This service was developed by USDA and is available to practitioners at no cost. VSPS has been around for several years and is used by a number of practitioners in the Commonwealth.

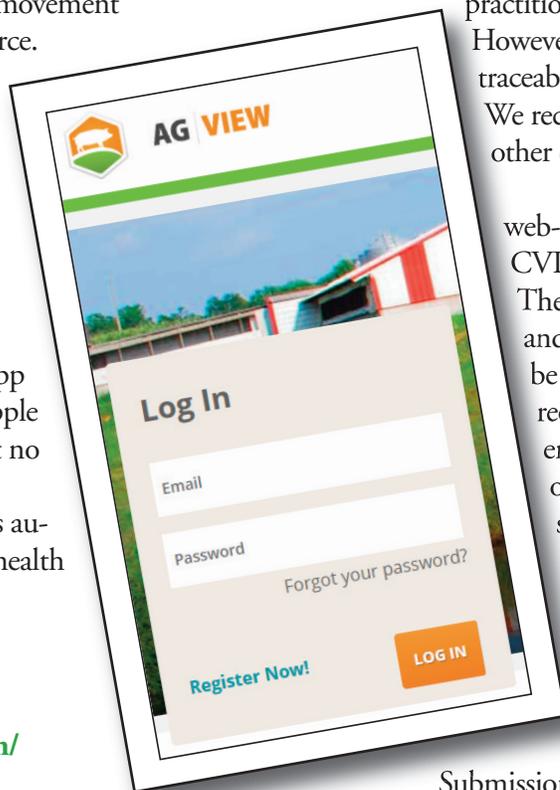
However, this application does not provide traceability data directly to state officials.

We recommend that practitioners use one of the other eCVI applications instead of VSPS.

USDA is reportedly working on new web-based applications to submit electronic CVI's and electronic test/vaccination charts. These tools may be available by Fall 2020 and will likely require that veterinarians be eAuthenticated. This is a process required of all individuals not directly employed by the federal government in order to access any federal information system. Veterinarians must apply online for an account and present a form of official identification (e.g., state driver's license) in person at a USDA Service Center such as a county USDA office.

We will provide additional information as it is available.

Submission of electronic health papers will improve the quality of regulatory information, enhance disease traceability and should make the movement of animals in interstate commerce more efficient over time. Veterinarians writing health papers for animals moving into and out of Virginia are strongly encouraged to begin exploring the aforementioned applications in preparation



for the transition away from paper forms. For additional information or questions, please contact the VDACS Office of Veterinary Services.

A few important notes about entering information in electronic (or paper) CVI applications:

- Entry requirements for all states can be found at **www.interstatelivestock.com**
- Please include owner/business names and complete street addresses for origin and destination premises
- Premises ID numbers (PIN) are not required by most states, but are helpful if known
- **Please do not include spaces or other punctuation in tag numbers**
 - 840 or AIN numbers should look like this: 840003123456789

NEW TOOL FOR VETERINARIANS TO ASSIST HORSES IN NEED

A new tool is available to equine veterinarians to improve the welfare of horses. A partnership between the ASPCA and The Foundation for the Horse (formally known as the American Association of Equine Practitioners, AAEP) was announced at the AAEP convention in December. The program is called Vet Direct Safety Net Program.

In a survey conducted by the ASPCA, 45 percent of responders said safety-net veterinary services would allow them to avoid selling or giving away their horse. In order to keep horses in their homes, Vet Direct will provide reimbursement to veterinarians to cover the cost of veterinary care incurred by an owner that is in financial distress. The program is designed to support services for practical issues such as lameness, dental needs, lacerations, non-surgical colic and euthanasia. The focus for this work is on practical medicine with a total cap for services per horse set at \$600. Owners also are asked to pay for a portion of the care deemed appropriate by the veterinarian. The program is funded at \$50,000 for the first year.

Last year the ASPCA funded a similar pilot program. The program served more than 50 horses with the assistance of ten veterinarians, at an average total cost of \$450 per horse. Clients contributed approximately 27 percent of the total cost of care for the horses in the program. Of the animals who received care, 58 percent are still in their original home. For the remaining 42 percent, euthanasia and disposal was the most humane treatment option.

In order to utilize Vet Direct, a veterinarian must be a member of the AAEP. The veterinarian will need to make

- USDA NUES/metal tags should look like this: 52ABC1234
- **Please do not enter sequential tag numbers using hyphens or other “shorthand”;** a tag number is required for each animal for the eCVI to be valid - unless the eCVI program you are using has a means of entering the first tag and number of animals such that an individual number for each animal is created. Computers do not understand that “52ABC0001-0010” means 10 animals.
- Please do not enter farm tags, management tags, tattoos or other non-official ID in places reserved for official ID; these tags usually can be entered as other ID.

an account with the Vet Direct Program through The Foundation for the Horse. The onboarding process will require registration, participation in a webinar and signing a memorandum of understanding with the Vet Direct Program. The veterinarian may then submit a copy of the invoice with a diagnosis and treatment information. Vet Direct will follow up on the outcome with the owner over time to learn how future resources can be best directed.

If you are interested in utilizing this program for horses in your area that are in need of veterinary services, contact The Foundation for the Horse at 859.233.0147 or **info@foundationforthehorse.org**.



CHANGES TO REQUIREMENTS FOR EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANEMIA SUBMISSIONS TO LABORATORIES

In October 2019, the USDA issued a new guidance document to all laboratories conducting testing for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA). This document, VS Guidance 15201.1- Approval of Laboratories to Conduct Tests for Equine Infectious Anemia, seeks to standardize and clarify practices for public and private testing laboratories, and to enhance the ability of regulatory authorities to follow up on any positive results.

In order to adhere to this updated guidance, the four VDACS regional animal health laboratories (RAHLs) serving the Commonwealth's equine and veterinary communities are informing veterinary practitioners of some of the points in the guidance, so that potential delays in testing can be avoided.

Some of the important points are:

- Only Category II federally accredited veterinarians may submit EIA tests to testing laboratories. For their part, the RAHLs have been tasked with making sure submitting veterinarians are currently Category II accredited, and samples for testing will not be accepted from veterinarians who are not so accredited.
- Category II accredited submitting veterinarians must accurately and fully complete the EIA transcript (VS 10-11). **This includes a mandatory narrative description of the horse.** In addition, other important identifying information must be recorded, including name, age, breed, color and gender. This information is critical to regulatory officials in the event of a positive test result.
- When the laboratory receives an incomplete form, the testing laboratories will contact the submitting veterinarian and request that the veterinarian supply the missing information. In those cases, the laboratory will continue to process the sample; however, results will not be released until the form is properly completed.
- Likewise, a veterinarian may request a minor change to a form before results are reported, and

can contact the laboratory for assistance. Acceptable changes, for example, would include an address change or spelling mistake.

- After results are reported and distributed, the original VS 10-11 form cannot be changed. Within 30 days of the sample date, a new VS 10-11 created by the submitting veterinarian can be accepted and completed by the laboratory, but only if:
 - All older distributed copies of the form can be collected and destroyed
 - It does not involve a change of ownership
 - The changes do not substantially affect identification of the animal
 - The laboratory is comfortable with all proposed changes. If the laboratory is uncomfortable with the amount or number of proposed changes, they will request a completely new form and blood sample from the submitter.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your local regional animal health laboratory.



LETTER FROM STATE VETERINARIAN CHARLES BROADDUS

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about not being able to provide the expected service to the animal agriculture stakeholders in Virginia. But my bosses – the Deputy Commissioner, Commissioner, Secretary and her staff, and all the way up to the Governor, are supportive of serving our fellow Virginians in many ways, and they immediately put me at ease when I told them of my deployment. I am extremely thankful to them and all of my teammates at VDACS for picking up the slack while I am away.

The experience in Afghanistan has been a good one for me, and I consider it an honor and privilege to serve here. The mission as a veterinarian is a good one – the food inspection and food manufacturing facility audit work that I do for ensuring food safety is very important in protecting the health of our soldiers. I oversee the food inspection activities for all food provided to U.S. soldiers as well as audit food manufacturing facilities that provide food to the U.S. military in Afghanistan; both roles involve travel around the country. And it is certainly rewarding to help keep the working dogs performing their jobs as effectively as possible – as part of the overall NATO support mission, I have seen and treated dogs from the U.S., Norway, Turkey, Denmark and England. When healthy and performing well, those dogs save many lives through the work they do on patrols and in explosives detection.

I am very sorry to miss the annual VVMA and Food Animal Practitioners meetings this year in late February, as well as a number of other producer group meetings that happen in the winter – I honestly thought of that when I was first told that I would be deployed until April of 2020, and that I hated to miss those important meetings. But with a fresh perspective of gratitude for having a job that allows me to work to support the agriculture industry, I look forward to seeing you after I return home in April.

We now also provide veterinary care for the many military working dogs used in military operations, including dogs trained in patrol activities as well as in explosives and drug detection.



Charles C. Broaddus



CONTACT INFORMATION

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