



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES**  
**Updates from the State Veterinarian's Office** **Spring 2014**

**WHAT'S INSIDE**

*Letter from State Veterinarian*

*Update on Animal Disease Traceability in Virginia*

*Testing Program for Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) in Imported Horses*

*Scrapie Update Year 2013  
The search for the last of the scrapie test-positive animals*

*National Veterinary Accreditation Program*



**LETTER FROM STATE VETERINARIAN**

One of the challenging aspects of our profession is the huge variety of opportunities and challenges that are a constant with our work. In 2014, I anticipate that both the accredited and the regulatory veterinarians will discuss adjustments to improve livestock and poultry traceability and will re-think practical on-farm biosecurity with our clients.

In recent years, livestock and equine veterinarians have worked with clients to manage neurological EHV, contagious equine metritis and bovine tuberculosis. The discovery of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea in the United States during 2013 is a frightening example that a significant disease can get into our country and into one of the livestock industry's most controlled management systems. More stringent biosecurity may not provide perfect protection from the introduction of diseases into your clients' animals, but I think that veterinarians are obligated to talk about appropriate vaccination, isolation of new additions and animals returning from events, managing equipment that may serve as vectors and limiting visitor access to animals.

The federal Animal Disease Traceability rule is in place and veterinarians should anticipate increased activity to enforce the rule. Many states have or will be implementing new state rules to allow them to comply with the new federal requirements and the practitioner should expect all states to start re-viewing import and export documents more critically. Official identification and a certificate of veterinary inspection will meet the federal requirement of any state in the union, but each state may have some movement requirements that are specific to the livestock and equine industries in that state. Please call my office or one of the VDACS offices or labs if you need help determining movement requirements to assist your clients.



*Richard L. Wilkes*  
Richard L. Wilkes, D.V.M.

## UPDATE ON ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY IN VIRGINIA

There are more than 20,000 cattle producers in Virginia, located in almost every county in the state. Every day, thousands of cattle change hands within the state and in interstate commerce. This presents a challenging scenario if a serious disease occurs in a Virginia herd or is imported in animals from another state. Since 2004, the Office of Veterinary Services (OVS) within the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) has been working with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), private veterinary practitioners and the livestock industry to improve our ability to trace animal diseases in the Commonwealth.

Better traceability is all about better animal identification and record keeping. The Virginia Animal ID Program promotes the use of permanent, individual and official identification on cattle for many years and the newly published Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) Rule ([www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability)) requires official identification for most cattle involved in interstate commerce.

What is “official ID?” Official identification numbering systems and tags for livestock are controlled by federal and state animal health officials to prevent duplicate tag numbers and to ensure that tag numbers have enough information to assist in tracing diseased animals. In Virginia, metal ear tags beginning with “52” or “52V” have been used for many years for testing and vaccination purposes. More recently, plastic tags using numbers starting with 9xx or 840 (USA) have been introduced. Some tags distributed by the Holstein Association USA and other industry groups have also been considered official in the past. However, under the newly published federal ADT Rule, **only the following cattle tags will be considered official for interstate commerce in all states by March 2015:**

- Silver metal tag (e.g., 52ABC1234 in Virginia)
- Orange metal “Bangs” tag (e.g., 52VAC1234 in Virginia)
- Official plastic tags using the 52ABC1234 numbering system
- Plastic and electronic tags using the 840-prefix

All tags must bear the US Shield, be tamper-evident and their distribution must be reported to state or federal

animal health officials. The intentional removal or defacing of official ID tags is illegal unless required for animal health purposes or animals are at a final processing facility. Producers may still use whatever tags they like for herd management purposes, but official ID will be required for all regulatory programs (brucellosis testing and vaccination, TB testing) and documents (interstate health certificates). Many states are already requiring official ID for cattle shipped to their locations.

Electronic 840-series button tags are the preferred choice for most adult cattle in Virginia. These tags have a high retention rate if applied properly, are official for all testing, vaccination and interstate movements and offer fast and accurate reading of tag numbers by electronic equipment. VDACS provides 840-series RFID tags to private practitioners at no charge for use in regulatory programs as long as funding is adequate. Electronic tags can also be purchased from a variety of online vendors (see this page on the Allflex USA web site for a partial list of tag vendors: [www.allflexusa.com/order](http://www.allflexusa.com/order).) Official metal tags and other forms of identification (back tags) are also provided by VDACS at no cost.

In addition to providing official ID tags, VDACS is working with livestock markets and private veterinarians to capture animal identification records more efficiently using e-business technologies such as field data loggers, electronic documents and web-based data management systems. Ultimately, these technologies will allow cattle to be traced more effectively in the event of a serious disease outbreak, which will reduce disruptions in farm operations and the marketing of Virginia cattle. The Virginia Animal Disease Traceability Working Group provides guidance to VDACS on implementation of the ADT program in Virginia and is comprised of representatives from a broad cross-section of the livestock industry. For additional information on Animal Disease Traceability in Virginia, please contact Rick Odom, State Program Coordinator, at 804.692.0600 or [richard.odom@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:richard.odom@vdacs.virginia.gov).



Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services • State Veterinarian's Office  
102 Governor Street • Richmond, Virginia 23219 • [www.vdacs.virginia.gov/animals/index.shtml](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/animals/index.shtml)

# TESTING PROGRAM FOR CONTAGIOUS EQUINE METRITIS (CEM) IN IMPORTED HORSES

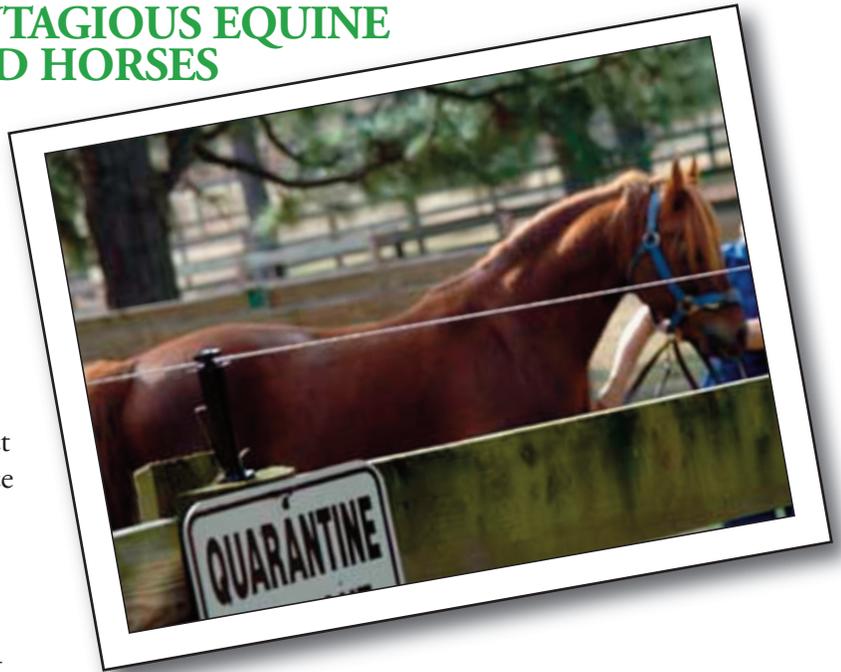
Sexually intact horses over 731 days of age imported from CEM-affected countries must undergo quarantine and testing for CEM at approved facilities prior to release for entry into the United States. This testing must be monitored by State or Federal Animal Health Authorities.

CEM is a venereal disease of horses caused by *Taylorella equigenitalis*, a fastidious gram negative bacteria. The nature of the organism is such that strict adherence to sampling protocols is necessary to reduce the risk of false negative lab results. An outbreak of CEM was discovered in December 2009-2010 in the U.S. as a result of an imported Fjord stallion from Denmark into Wisconsin in 2000. A total of 23 stallions and five mares were found to be infected during this event that involved 48 states and countless hours of epidemiological investigation.

Testing of quarantined horses is done through a series of bacterial cultures taken from reproductive tract sites and by serological testing of mares using complement fixation (CF) for CEM antibodies. Culture samples must be placed in Amies refrigerated transport media and plated by an approved CEM lab/bacteriologist within 48 hours of collection. VDACS' Harrisonburg and Warrenton labs are the approved CEM labs in Virginia.

Accredited vets conducting the collections must be monitored by State or Federal Animal Health Officials, and only veterinarians approved by the Office of Veterinary Services to collect samples are allowed to do so. Practitioners interested in being approved to collect samples and provide the prophylactic treatment should contact the Office of Veterinary Services at 540.209.9120.

The culturing protocol for imported **mares** requires three sets of cultures collected three days apart but must be completed within 12 days. Once all samples have been determined to be negative, five consecutive days of washing and prophylactic treatment is required before quarantine is released. The **stallion** protocol requires the test-breeding of two CEM clean mares after the stallions' cultures are determined to be negative. The bred test mares are then cultured three times and CF tested negative 21 days post-breeding before releasing the quarantined stallion.



To avoid false negative culture results, horses may not be treated with systemic antibiotics while undergoing CEM testing. If systemic antibiotic treatment is required, a minimum of seven days must lapse between the last systemic treatment and the initial CEM culture.

An approved CEM quarantine facility must be pre-approved by State or Federal Animal Health Officials and must be re-approved annually. Facilities interested in being approved should contact the Office of Veterinary Services.

**Contact Harrisonburg Office of Veterinary Services (540.209.9120) for more details.**



**Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services • State Veterinarian's Office**  
102 Governor Street • Richmond, Virginia 23219 • [www.vdacs.virginia.gov/animals/index.shtml](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/animals/index.shtml)

## SCRAPIE UPDATE YEAR 2013

### The search for the last of the scrapie test-positive animals

The goal of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. sheep industry is to eradicate scrapie from the U.S. by 2017. Since 2003, the initiation of the scrapie eradication program, 397,572 samples have been collected with 469 confirmed positives. In comparing positive samples detected in 2013 with those from 2003, there has been a 90% decrease in the number of positive samples found at slaughter. The Regulatory Scrapie Slaughter Surveillance (RSSS) program is centered in USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) inspected slaughter plants where individual animal tag numbers are recorded at the time of slaughter and testing. In 2013, samples from 44,955 animals nationwide were collected for scrapie. This includes 42,888 RSSS and 2,067 on-farm samples, with a total of 15 positive animals detected. A significant part of the National Scrapie Surveillance Plan includes sampling minimums for sheep and goats based on their state-of-origin. This ensures adequate geographical representation to document scrapie freedom.

**Testing of on-farm animals (regulatory field cases and live-animal testing) is underutilized.** Sheep and goats that are slaughtered outside the commercial slaughter facilities are missed in the routine scrapie slaughter surveillance. As the National Scrapie Eradication Program moves closer toward meeting the goal of identifying the last remaining cases of classical scrapie, finding and testing all sheep and goats meeting targeted sampling criteria is even more important. Before the United States may be declared “scrapie free,” remaining cases must be found. Submission of heads from sheep/goats over 18 months of age found dead or euthanized on farms is critically important. Without these submissions, scrapie-infected animals go undetected, costing the sheep and goat industries \$10 to \$20 million annually. Limited funding is available for whole body necropsies of sheep and goats at the Regional Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratories. Scrapie samples will be collected and submitted from these animals.

Nearly all of Virginia's sheep and goats are commercially slaughtered outside of the Commonwealth. It is essential that all of our sheep and goats that go to slaughter are properly tagged. We now believe that scrapie in goats is statistically equal to that of sheep. There have

been 34 scrapie-positive goats recorded in the past 11 years. That means that all our goats must be individually identified. All six of the goat cases in 2013 were detected by on-farm samples. **With limited exceptions, all sheep and goats should have official ID prior to leaving the farm.** Several types of tags for individual animal identification are available free of charge. Please contact your regional VDACS office or the USDA office for assistance in ordering tags.

The 15 scrapie-positive animals detected in 2013 originated from eight states. Two of the eight states border Virginia and at least six of these states are considered regular business partners in the Commonwealth's seed stock industry. Virginia's last case of scrapie was diagnosed in 2009. Due to the close proximity of the disease in neighboring states, all imported animals must be officially identified and listed on a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) for traceability purposes.

In addition, **USDA APHIS provides shipping boxes and labels for the submission of heads for scrapie testing at no cost to producers.** All of Virginia's Regional Diagnostic Laboratories accept heads for scrapie testing. To learn more about submitting samples or requesting a box, go to [www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/animal\\_diseases/scrapie](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie), or contact your regional VDACS office.



## NATIONAL VETERINARY ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

In 1921, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) established the Veterinary Accreditation Program so private practitioners could assist federal veterinarians in controlling animal diseases.

In 1992, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) established a national program. The National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP) is managed nationally but authorization is still on a state-by-state basis. Creating a national system has helped APHIS standardize the accreditation procedures and requirements, allowing for more uniform administration of the program.

The enhancements that have taken place in the NVAP were in the works for many years. During the past decade, this country has seen the incursion of several foreign animal diseases (FADs). These have included outbreaks of contagious equine metritis (CEM), outbreaks of equine piroplasmiasis (EP), an epizootic of exotic Newcastle disease (END), epizootics of West Nile virus (WNV), cases of screwworm, cases of monkeypox and pandemics of the influenza virus, including H1N1. In the vast majority of these incursions, the FADs have successfully been controlled with the veterinary practitioner being the first line of defense against such catastrophic disease events.

Because of these FAD events, several major animal health and veterinary medicine organizations called for enhancements of the old NVAP. The 2001 Animal Health Safeguarding Review of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) cited a need to “redesign and upgrade the National Veterinary Accreditation Program” and suggested that “the accreditation program be the core for emergency preparedness and the response plan.”

The new NVAP centers on continuing education credits to maintain accreditation. All veterinarians are asked to complete a form (USDA 1-36A) which seeks to categorize veterinarians into two groups- **Category I** – Dogs and Cats only and **Category II** – All animals. This form can be found at [www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/forms.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/forms.shtml) or by calling the USDA office at 804.343.2560. When completed, the form should be returned to the USDA office in Richmond. Three hours of continuing



education are required for Category I and six hours for Category II to maintain accreditation.

In conjunction with National Accreditation, Virginia requires a State Accreditation portion as well. A meeting is scheduled with a regional veterinarian where this can be performed. After completion of this orientation, a form will be provided to the USDA to show completion.

When the Accreditation letter is mailed, it will list the renewal date for obtaining your Continuing Education hours. This training can be found online at: [www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/vet\\_accreditation/nvap\\_modules/NVAP/NVAP/index.htm](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/vet_accreditation/nvap_modules/NVAP/NVAP/index.htm)



**For more Information concerning Accreditation, contact your local VDACS Veterinary Services Office or the USDA.**

**Harrisonburg 540.209.9120**

**Richmond 804.786.2483**

**Wytheville 276.228.5501**

**USDA - Richmond 804.343.2560**

# OFFICE OF VETERINARY SERVICES, VDACS

For general questions or communication, please email us at [vastatevet@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:vastatevet@vdacs.virginia.gov), or feel free to contact any of our staff members below:

**Dr. Richard Wilkes, *State Veterinarian***

804.692.0601

e-mail: [richard.wilkes@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:richard.wilkes@vdacs.virginia.gov)

**Dr. Thomas Lavelle, *Wytheville Regional Supervisor***

276.228.5501

e-mail: [tom.lavelle@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:tom.lavelle@vdacs.virginia.gov)

**Dr. Charlie Broaddus, *Program Manager***

***Office of Veterinary Services***

804.786.2483

e-mail: [charles.broaddus@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:charles.broaddus@vdacs.virginia.gov)

**Dr. Bruce Bowman, *Harrisonburg***

***Field Veterinarian***

540.209.9120

e-mail: [bruce.bowman@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:bruce.bowman@vdacs.virginia.gov)

**Dr. Don Hopson, *Harrisonburg Regional Supervisor***

540.209.9120

e-mail: [donald.hopson@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:donald.hopson@vdacs.virginia.gov)

**Dr. Joe Garvin, *Program Manager***

***Office of Laboratory Services***

804.221.2543

e-mail: [joseph.garvin@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:joseph.garvin@vdacs.virginia.gov)

**Dr. Chris McNeill, *Lynchburg Regional Supervisor***

434.200.9976

e-mail: [chris.mcneill@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:chris.mcneill@vdacs.virginia.gov)



Office of the State Veterinarian  
102 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219