



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES**  
**Updates from the State Veterinarian's Office** **Spring 2017**



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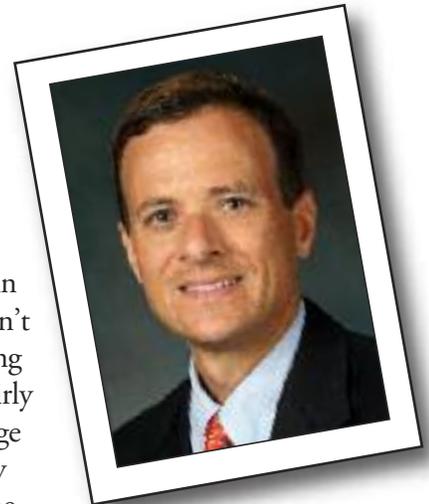
## LETTER FROM THE STATE VETERINARIAN

Soon after I started at VDACS in 2009 with the Office of Veterinary Services, I asked my new boss, Dr. Wilkes, to please be patient with me, as I told him it may take me 3-4 months to catch on to things at my new job (in reality, I thought it would take longer, but didn't want to look too bad so soon on the job). Being six years out of vet school at the time, I was fairly confident in my clinical abilities and knowledge of infectious disease prevention, but regulatory veterinary medicine was a whole new ball game. I recall being very relieved when Dr. Wilkes assured me that it would take 3-4 YEARS to really get comfortable and proficient in this area.

Since that time, I have continued to learn something new just about every day. On my very first official day as State Veterinarian, May 11, 2016, I was bleeding pigs in a muddy pen to test for *Brucella suis*, as a pasture-raised herd in Virginia was linked to a farm with Brucella positive pigs in NY that was first diagnosed after a farm worker there tested positive for *B. suis*. On most days I am not literally working in pig manure like I was on that day, but the fact that is how I started my new job will always stick out in my mind, and seems very appropriate.

Over the last eight years with VDACS, I have enjoyed the work that I am privileged to be able to perform in support of the producers and veterinarians in Virginia. There are many truly excellent and dedicated people working for VDACS, and we all value the fact that we work for you. I have learned much over the past few years from Dr. Wilkes, and continue to learn from many of the other folks that I am honored to work with. If there is anything related to animal health or welfare that we can do to help you in your practice, please let any of us know. If you will be as patient with me as Dr. Wilkes was, I hope to be able to work alongside you in this role for many years to come.

Charles C. Broaddus, D.V.M., PhD, Dip. ACT



## THE VFD IS IN EFFECT – NOW WHAT?

January 1, 2017 has passed and the FDA Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) rule is in place. All veterinarians that treat animals that may be fed medicated feeds must be familiar with the new rules and product labels. FDA has indicated that the gate-keeper of this new rule will fall at the level of the feed mill or distributor who must ensure compliant documents are in place before product goes out the door. Feed mills are already federally inspected. Examining the VFD documents will become a routine part of that inspection. Once the inspectors become familiar with the updated inspection process, there is an increased likelihood that downstream inspections of documents and the Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR) will be conducted at the veterinary and/or producer level. Certain medications, including anthelmintics and coccidiostats, are exempted from the requirement for a VFD.

Extra-label use of VFD drugs for MAJOR species such as cattle, horses, swine, chickens, turkeys, dogs and cats is not authorized. Extralabel use means “actual use or intended use of a drug in an animal in a manner that is not in accordance with the approved labeling.” This includes, but is not limited to, use in species not listed in the labeling, use for indications not listed in the labeling use at frequencies or routes of administration other than those stated in the labeling, and deviation from the labeled withdrawal time based on these different uses. For those who treat MINOR animal species such as sheep, goats, deer, fish, bees and others, FDA is aware of the paucity of available therapeutic drugs. FDA has recently released an updated Compliance Policy Guide (CPG)

addressing the use of VFD drugs in minor species. Broadly speaking, CPG 615.115 states that “... when there are no approved treatment options available and the health of animals is threatened, and suffering or death would result from failure to treat the affected animals, extralabel use of medicated feed may be considered for treatment of minor species only.”

Food animal veterinarians now have a unique opportunity to be more involved in making decisions regarding usage of medically important antibiotics. Our industry has evolved to where the consulting aspect of the profession has become a very important part of our practice activity. Decisions about antibiotic use are just as important as our clinical ability to deliver calves, preg check animals and diagnose medical ailments. We are also moving into an era where proper documentation is more important than ever before. Are you licensed and validly practicing in Virginia? Do you have a documented VCPR with the client? Do you maintain clear and complete records supporting your diagnosis and treatment decisions (records should always include the animal’s permanent ID, medication administered, date of treatment, dosage, route of administration and proper meat or milk withdrawal times)? The end goal is to reduce or eliminate tissue residues when the animal is slaughtered and prevent any adulterated product from reaching the consumer.



## CALLING ALL BEE VETERINARIANS

Do you have an interest in honeybees? The VFD is having a major impact on a minor species food animal group that desperately needs your skills. Specific honeybee diseases like American and European Foul Brood can be managed by antibiotics. If a veterinarian is not available to write the VFD order or prepare a prescription, best management practices require that the hive be destroyed by fire. There are other instances where a practitioner could be instrumental in maintaining hive health.



Keeping our pollinators on the job will have lasting positive effects in the food chain. If you have any interest in bee medicine, please contact the Virginia state apiarist, Keith Tignor, at [keith.tignor@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:keith.tignor@vdacs.virginia.gov) or 804.786.3515. If you have other questions, please contact Bruce Bowman at [Bruce.Bowman@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:Bruce.Bowman@vdacs.virginia.gov) or 540.209.9120.

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## WHAT IS OFFICIAL ID IN VIRGINIA?

The days of using “Daisy” or “Sugarbug” as identification on CVIs or Tuberculosis and Brucellosis test forms are long gone. In our efforts toward traceability, standardization of official ID has become a necessity. This article will break down Virginia’s official ID requirements by species, provide information on where to obtain tags and explain your record keeping requirements as practitioners.

### — Cattle —

Virginia no longer recognizes farm ID tags, animal names or breed registry tattoos as official ID. These non-official forms of ID may be included on regulatory forms, CVIs and lab submissions but at least one form of official ID is required. These official ID tags are available free of charge for all cattle vaccinated or tested under regulatory disease programs. Practitioners are required to keep records on the distribution of all official ID for 5 years. Once applied, it is unlawful to remove official ID tags unless required for health reasons (e.g. infection or other problem caused by the tag). Forms of official ID include:

- 840-series visual or RFID tags (RFID preferred for all classes of cattle and all purposes)
- Silver metal: “brite or NUES” tags (52-series in Virginia)
- Orange metal “bangs” tags (52-series in Virginia)

### — Dairy —

Most adult dairy stock and heifers are already officially identified through other programs, but steers have not been consistently tagged with official ID. The USDA released an Animal Disease Traceability Rule (ADT Rule) that requires all dairy steers born after March 11, 2013 to be tagged with official ID when they are transported across state lines. Ideally, cattle are tagged on the farms of origin before they are transported to markets or across state lines by dealers or other buyers. The VDACS Office of Veterinary Services will provide official USDA metal tags and tag applicators at no cost to dairy producers for tagging steers on their farms. Tags should be placed in the top of the right ear of the animal and should not be shared with other farms. There is no reporting requirement for producers. Producers may request tags from our regional offices in Harrisonburg or Wytheville.

### — Sheep and Goats —

The ADT Rule requires that sheep and goats moving through interstate commerce have official ID as well as any animals tested for regulatory disease programs. Forms of official ID include:

- Scrapie Flock tag

- Scrapie Serial tag
- 840-series electronic or visual tag
- Microchip implant
- Official Goat Registration Tattoo, located on ears, tail web or flank, consisting of a flock identification and an individual animal number.
- Scrapie Tattoo (goats only): flock identification and individual animal number must be tattooed and recorded.

### — Equine —

Forms of official ID include:

- A description sufficient to identify the individual equine. This can be a written attachment to a CVI, information included on a Coggins test or a photographic record
- Legible breed association tattoo number
- Affixed or implanted device (microchip) bearing a unique individual identification number

### — Swine —

Forms of official ID include:

- 840 series electronic (RFID) or visual tags
- Official USDA metal or plastic swine tags issued through federal and state programs
- Ear tag or tattoo recorded by a purebred registry Registration ear notch (a number listed on the individual’s registration paper which is notched in the ear appropriately)
- 840-series microchip implant (typically in pet pigs)

### — Llamas and Alpacas —

- Forms of official ID include:
- 840-series microchip implant
- 840-series visual or electronic ear tag
- Official USDA metal tag.



# THE FRAMEWORK FOR ANIMAL WELFARE LAWS IN VIRGINIA

Animal Welfare is an increasingly important component of veterinary medicine and public sentiment. Federally, the USDA Animal Care Division is responsible for upholding and enforcing the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act. The Animal Welfare Act and its associated regulations require that federally established standards of care and treatment be provided for certain warm-blooded animals that are bred for commercial sale, used in research, transported commercially or exhibited to the public. The Horse Protection Act and its associated regulations seek to put an end to soring by preventing sore horses from participating in exhibitions/shows/sales/auctions. Inspection and oversight of zoos and animal exhibits is the responsibility of federal inspectors with the USDA Animal Care Division.

At the state level, the Office of Animal Care and Emergency Response (OACER) within the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, provides subject matter expertise on Virginia's Comprehensive Animal Care Laws. These laws, which can be found in their entirety on the VDACS website, outline the minimum standards of care for companion and agricultural animals, define criminal acts of animal cruelty, provide guidelines for animal seizure and mandate the existence and training of animal control officers. Veterinarians should be aware that Virginia law sets minimum standards for food, water, shelter, space, exercise, transportation and veterinary treatment for companion animals and food, water and veterinary care for agricultural animals (livestock and poultry).

**Primary responsibility for enforcing Virginia's animal care laws rests with local animal control and law enforcement agencies and complaints against individual animal owners should be directed to local authorities.** Animal control officers are one of only four animal care professionals in Virginia who are required to complete initial training and continuing education (veterinarians, licensed veterinary technicians and certified wildlife rehabbers being the other three). OACER staff work closely with animal control officers across the Commonwealth, and with the Virginia Animal Control Association, by providing veterinary expertise to such agencies as they enforce these laws to ensure the humane treatment of Virginia's animal population.

OACER is responsible for enforcing sections of Virginia's Comprehensive Animal Care Laws and regulations related to animal shelters in Virginia. There are two types of animal shelters in Virginia: public and private. Every locality is mandated to operate or contract to operate a public animal shelter. Virginia law mandates that all unowned animals be housed in the public animal shelter for a minimum holding period to allow their owners time to locate them. That minimum holding period is five days for animals with no signs of identification and ten days for animals with identification. **Individuals, veterinarians and private animal shelters who find unowned animals must notify the public animal shelter within 48 hours.** All animal shelters in Virginia are subject to unannounced inspections by OACER staff. In addition, OACER staff oversee the Humane Euthanasia in Animal Shelters Program and provide training to animal control officers and animal shelter workers throughout the state. OACER encourages Virginia veterinarians to engage with their local animal shelter, and is able to provide subject matter expertise on shelter medicine and oversight.

Virginia's Comprehensive Animal Care Laws:  
<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title3.2/chapter65/>



## EQUINE HERPES MYELOENCEPHALOPATHY: DO YOU HAVE A PLAN?

Scenario: Dr. T is called out to see an acutely neurologic, severely ataxic mare on Wednesday night at a large boarding facility. Ultimately, the mare is euthanized. The next afternoon, PCR for EHV-1 comes back positive for the neuropathogenic variant of the virus. Three days ago, Dr. T admitted a horse from the same boarding facility to her hospital barn for medical treatment of a pelvic flexure impaction. Dr. T needs to inform the boarding facility owner to stop movement in or out of the boarding facility before the owner travels with 10 of her boarders to a three-day event in Pennsylvania. Dr. T knows that the facility owner will be concerned, and perhaps reluctant, to share this news with her clients, and everyone is concerned about the financial impact a lengthy quarantine will have on business. Dr. T begins to consider the impact on her own hospital and business, as she will have to quarantine her hospital due to exposure from the horse with the pelvic flexure impaction.

Does this scenario seem unlikely? In Virginia, we have similar situations happen each year. The thought of having a client's farm quarantined for equine herpes virus strikes fear into the heart of many an equine veterinarian. A quarantine can impact the ability of the owner or manager to conduct business and can hurt a farm's reputation. In addition, more and more equine veterinary practices have facilities to treat in-patients. If a horse exposes other patients in the hospital, the equine hospital may have to be quarantined. If these situations are not distressing enough, an EHM outbreak at one of Virginia's many show grounds would impact the horse industry across the state and the mid-Atlantic region.

Equine herpesvirus – 1 is a ubiquitous virus among the equine population. It has been estimated that up to 80 percent of horses are latently infected with at least one variant of the virus regardless of their vaccination status. Because so many horses carry the virus, we cannot prevent it from causing disease. Vaccination does not prevent the neurologic form and some studies suggest it may increase its prevalence if given within 5 weeks of a period of stress such as a horse show. As an equine practitioner, it is just a matter of time before you will find yourself involved in an outbreak.

When an outbreak does occur, the consequences can be mitigated significantly if the farm or event manager, practicing veterinarian and State Veterinarian's office

work together as a team in the interest of the horse's health and continuity of business. If you suspect EHM, please call the State Veterinarian's office immediately. The following

simple steps can be implemented before an official quarantine is put in place in order to prevent further spread of the disease: stop movement of all horses in or out of the premises; isolate all horses with clinical signs including a fever; separate exposed horses by at least 30 feet from non-exposed horses; advise the barn manager to take the temperature of all horses twice a day; eliminate all people, including the farrier, from having unnecessary contact with any of the exposed horses; and instruct the barn staff to follow biosecurity protocols. These steps do not eliminate the need to contact the State Veterinarian's Office, but may reduce disease spread; **remember EHM is a reportable disease in Virginia.**

The worst time to learn about quarantine plans and biosecurity protocols is after EHM has occurred. All multi-day horse events, equine veterinary hospitals and farms where horses travel should have an EHM response plan. The plan should include designated areas to isolate affected and exposed horses away from the general population during quarantine. If quarantined horses can be adequately isolated, the facility cleaned and disinfected and stringent biosecurity is used, it is possible that the facility can be cleared for use. VDACS has worked with the majority of large equine referral hospitals in the state to put together a response plan that is acceptable to all involved. In the event of an EHM case, we are prepared to move quickly and decisively to decrease further exposure and get the business back up and running. If you would like us to work with you on a response plan for your practice, a client's farm or an equine event, please contact OVS.



## POULTRY SERVICES

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Office of Laboratory Services (OLS) provides a wide range of services to owners of poultry, from small backyard flocks to large, vertically integrated commercial poultry flocks. VDACS performs necropsies on birds at any of the regional animal health diagnostic laboratories (RAHLs) in Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, Warrenton and Wytheville. **Backyard poultry necropsies are offered at no cost to the producer.** In addition to assisting the producer in identifying health problems in their flock, it provides animal and human health officials with surveillance data on the incidence of avian influenza and other diseases. If you have a client having mortality in their flock, please contact your closest regional laboratory for submission information.

In addition to necropsy services, a variety of avian diagnostic tests are available in the VDACS RAHL system, primarily in Harrisonburg. In addition to our existing testing, we have recently been able to offer new tests such as *Ornithobacterium rhinotracheale* (ORT) PCR, Infectious Laryngotracheitis (ILT) PCR, quantitative water testing for *E. coli*, *Enterococcus*, *Pseudomonas* and serologic vaccination monitoring.

The Lynchburg RAHL recently became certified to perform some essential poultry diagnostic testing, including avian influenza ELISA and AGID serology, *Salmonella* culture from drag swabs and *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and *M. synoviae* serology. This testing is being done to support Central Virginia producers' efforts to comply with National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) guidelines.

The most significant recent development in poultry diagnostics within VDACS is the hiring of a new Poultry Diagnostician at the Harrisonburg RAHL. Dr. Jessica Walters joined OLS in May of 2016 after her graduation from the Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. She is a native of Powhatan, Virginia and has an agricultural background working with horses and beef cattle. While at Virginia Tech, she received her BS in Animal and Poultry Sciences—specializing in poultry science and production. She remained at Virginia Tech another seven years to receive her PhD in Biomedical and Veterinary Sciences—specializing in poultry infectious diseases, and her DVM—specializing in food animal medicine. She will sit for American College of Poultry Veterinarians

(ACPV) specialty boards in July 2017. Jessica enjoys participating in the education of backyard producers, teaching students about poultry medicine and working hands-on with the commercial industry. She has a passion for flock health, production management and disease diagnostics. In her free time, Dr. Walters enjoys horseback riding, hiking and traveling. She and her husband, along with their three dogs, horse and pig reside in Augusta County. She can be reached at [Jessica.Walters@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:Jessica.Walters@vdacs.virginia.gov), or 540.209.9130.





## CONTACT INFORMATION

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