



# Veterinary Research News

## Public Health

### Reserves of human-use rabies vaccine could alleviate supply worries

The nation's two human-use rabies vaccine suppliers have not kept pace with demand this year, and recent use could limit postexposure prophylaxis availability.

Public health officials have talked for years about creating a vaccine reserve, which would ideally be maintained by manufacturers and funded by the U.S. government, said Dr. Charles Rupprecht, chief of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's rabies program. But starting such a reserve would require fighting fiscal restraints and public perception, he said.

People generally don't think of rabies as a preventable disease for humans, considering it more of a problem among wildlife and dogs, he said. And current economic conditions may outweigh the validity and utility of a reserve.

State and federal authorities, along with vaccine manufacturers, have been restricting vaccinations since May.

Dr. Richard Franka, a microbiologist for the CDC, said there has been enough vaccine for people exposed to the virus. But pre-exposure vaccinations have recently been limited to people at greatest risk, such as veterinarians, wildlife biologists, and laboratory workers.

Rabies vaccine for humans was not available from one of the nation's main suppliers, Sanofi Pasteur, by mid-August. The other main supplier, Novartis, had been requiring risk assessments before releasing doses, according to an Aug. 22 CDC update sent to clinicians.

The situation for suppliers reversed near the end of the month,

when the CDC announced Sanofi Pasteur was shipping supplies of IMOVAX following risk assessments. In an Aug. 28 letter to customers, Novartis officials wrote that the company stopped accepting orders for its vaccine at 8 p.m. EST that day, except for use in laboratory-confirmed rabies cases.

By Sept. 4, Novartis was sending doses only for patients suffering adverse effects from other pre- or postexposure vaccines, according to the CDC. More of Novartis' vaccine was expected to be available sometime in October.

Supplies of rabies vaccine fell after Sanofi Pasteur started renovations last June in its IMOVAX rabies vaccine production facility in France, according to information from the CDC. The renovations are intended to maintain compliance with FDA and French regulations, and the facility is expected to be operational by late 2009.

Sanofi Pasteur produced inventory of its vaccine on the basis of historical demand, according to the CDC. But Novartis fell short of projected production of RabAvert earlier this year, according to the CDC.

Novartis Vaccines broke ground in May for a new rabies vaccine production facility in Germany, the letter says. The plant will produce supplies for the U.S. and it is expected to be operational in 2011, the letter says.

For more information on the vaccine supply, go to [www.cdc.gov/rabies/](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/). For more information on rabies, go to [www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org), click on the bar for public health, and scroll down to the rabies section.

## Resources

### Report available on antimicrobial resistance

The second executive report from the National Antimicrobial Resistance

Monitoring System—Enteric Bacteria is now available online from the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine.

The report summarizes NARMS data from 2004 on *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* isolates from food animals, retail meats, and humans. The report includes susceptibility data on *Escherichia coli* isolates from retail meats and chickens. The report also includes summary data from previous years.

As a supplement, CVM has posted interactive graphs on its Web site. The graphs allow users to review percentages of NARMS *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* isolates that were resistant to antimicrobials, by year. Users can select which antimicrobial agents and isolate sources to view.

The NARMS report is online at [www.fda.gov/cvm/2004NARMSExeRpt.htm](http://www.fda.gov/cvm/2004NARMSExeRpt.htm). The graphs are at [www.fda.gov/cvm/2004NARMSExeRptInter.htm](http://www.fda.gov/cvm/2004NARMSExeRptInter.htm).

### FDA provides summaries of adverse drug experiences

The Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine has posted the Cumulative Adverse Drug Experiences Summaries Report on its Web site.

The ADE report summarizes information about adverse experiences that CVM received from 1987 to July 7, 2008, by the active ingredient of each drug. Each entry lists the route of administration, species, number of animals, and signs of adverse reactions. Entries list signs of adverse reactions in order of frequency, from most to least frequent.

The report is at [www.fda.gov/cvm/ade\\_cum.htm](http://www.fda.gov/cvm/ade_cum.htm). The Web page also links to the "List of Brand Names Associated with Active Ingredients," "ADE Report Description," and "Glossary of Terms."

## FDA answers questions on BSE feed rule

The Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine has posted answers to frequently asked questions about implementation of the feed ban to prevent the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

The FDA recently published the BSE final rule, "Substances Prohibited from Use in Animal Food or Feed." The relevant FAQ is at [www.fda.gov/cvm/bse\\_QA.htm](http://www.fda.gov/cvm/bse_QA.htm).

Individuals with additional questions can contact Shannon Jordre, Division of Compliance (HFV-230), Office of Surveillance and Compliance, Center for Veterinary Medicine, Food and Drug Administration, MPN IV Bldg., Room 113, 7519 Standish Place, Rockville, MD 20855-2773; telephone, (240) 276-9229.

The BSE final rule appeared in the April 25 edition of the Federal Register, available at [www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/browse.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/browse.html).

## Funding Announced

### USDA renews funding for work on PRRS, avian influenza

The Department of Agriculture has renewed funding for the coordinated agricultural projects focusing on porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome and on avian influenza.

The USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service will devote \$4.8 million over four years to the PRRS CAP and \$5 million over three years to the AI CAP.

According to CSREES, PRRS affects about 60 percent of U.S. swine herds and costs the U.S. swine industry about \$580 million annually.

The University of Minnesota led the first phase of the PRRS CAP, which started in 2004. The project brought together researchers, veterinarians, producers, and industry to study the PRRS virus and develop tools for controlling infection.

Kansas State University will lead the second phase of the CAP. The focus will be on prevention and control tools, knowledge to support scientists, application of existing and new technologies in regional disease-

eradication efforts, and development of educational and outreach programs.

The coordinated agricultural project on avian influenza began in 2005, with the University of Maryland leading the first phase. The project created a multidisciplinary team of researchers and extension specialists from 17 states. The University of Maryland also will lead the second phase of the AI CAP.

The project has focused on areas such as epidemiology, basic research, diagnostics, vaccines, and education. Since 2005, AI CAP participants have:

- assembled a continent-wide network to study the ecologic and biologic characteristics of avian influenza viruses from wild birds
- integrated research and education into a program available to a range of poultry producers
- found that quail can change and expand the host range of AI viruses and that quail respiratory and intestinal tracts have humanlike sialic acid receptors that could partially explain the emergence of AI strains with the capacity to infect humans
- developed a comprehensive program to train producers and veterinarians on the depopulation and composting of flocks with avian influenza
- developed a testing component for rapid diagnosis of AI in birds
- developed promising vaccines for mass vaccination of birds

The PRRS and AI coordinated agricultural projects receive funding through the CSREES National Research Initiative. The initiative provides grants for research, education, and extension efforts to help address agricultural issues of national and regional importance.

### Funding supports clinical trials at N.C. veterinary school

North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine has received a five-year, \$625,000 gift from Novartis Animal Health U.S. to help support the clinical trials program in the college's Center for Comparative Medicine and Translational Research.

The gift will fund a clinical trials veterinarian, a veterinary research

technician, and laboratory space and equipment that will be dedicated to supporting clinical research studies involving patients in N.C. State's Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

The clinical trials program enables clinical investigators to evaluate novel approaches to diagnose and treat disease and deliver innovative solutions that enhance animal and human health. It also promotes research collaboration between clinical investigators, basic researchers, referring veterinarians, pet owners, and industry scientists.

Program participation may also interest veterinary students and residents in exploring careers in translational medicine.

## The Veterinary Community

### Tennessee appoints Thompson as dean

The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture has named Dr. James P. Thompson as dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, effective Oct. 1.

He succeeds Dr. Michael Blackwell, who retired in March. Dr. Leon Potgieter served as interim dean.

Previously, Dr. Thompson spent more than two decades on the faculty at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, where he received his veterinary degree in 1981. Most recently, he was executive associate dean and a professor in the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences. He held a joint appointment in the Department of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology in the University of Florida College of Medicine.

Dr. Thompson has been active with the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, chairing the AAVMC Academic Affairs Program Committee from 2005-2006. He also is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine and the American College of Veterinary Microbiology.

### Adams to lead Army Veterinary Corps

Col. Timothy K. Adams will succeed Brig. Gen. Michael B. Cates



Dr. James P. Thompson

as chief of the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps within the next few months.

As chief of the Veterinary Corps, Col. Adams also will receive a promotion to brigadier general. The AVMA advocated for the 2002 legislation that restored the general star to the corps.

Col. Adams' Army experience includes work in the Special Forces, public health, and research as well as leadership positions in garrison and operational locations. He has commanded three times—at the captain, lieutenant colonel, and colonel levels.

Most recently, Col. Adams commanded the Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense. While commanding the 72nd Medical Detachment (Veterinary Service), he led the first veterinary unit that deployed to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom. While in command of the 100th Medical Detachment (Veterinary Service) (Small), he deployed to Iraq for Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield.

Col. Adams also is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine. He earned his veterinary degree from Purdue University in 1986.

### **Hurricane Gustav prompts emergency responders to evacuate, shelter pets**

By all accounts, the evacuation of people and pets from the Gulf Coast ahead of Hurricane Gustav was a success.

The Louisiana State Animal Response Team oversaw evacuation and sheltering of animals from coastal Louisiana during the Labor Day weekend, with assistance from local volunteers and various humane groups. Dr. Heather Case, AVMA coordinator for emergency preparedness and response, said the AVMA helped organize standby veterinary volunteers and supplies from other states and the animal health industry.

Louisiana animal responders were particularly ready for Hurricane Gustav because they have increased planning and the frequency of training exercises since Hurricane Katrina hit the state three years ago. The evacua-

tion efforts provided transportation for people who had none, and many of their pets received rides in refrigerated trucks. It helped that many coastal residents with means of transportation evacuated with their pets.

In Louisiana, major temporary shelters for animal evacuees were located near human shelters in Shreveport, Alexandria, and Monroe. Dr. Case said LSART veterinarians headed the animal shelters—which stood ready to microchip, vaccinate, and house thousands of pets. The animal shelter in Shreveport housed hundreds of pets during the hurricane, while the other shelters housed fewer.

The Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was among several groups that helped evacuate animal shelters in the coastal region and supported the temporary shelters for animal evacuees. Emergency response personnel from the SPCA of Texas, ASPCA, Humane Society of the United States, United Animal Nations, and other groups also assisted in the efforts.

Dr. James Rundell of Monroe, Louisiana VMA president, said pet owners started arriving at the temporary animal shelter in the city at 4 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 31. The shelter housed numerous animals by late Monday, Sept. 1. Dr. Rundell added that because human and animal evacuees were in close proximity, pet owners were able to come by frequently to walk and play with their animals.

Individual veterinarians who incurred expenses because of Gustav may apply for reimbursement from the American Veterinary Medical Foundation. The AVMF provides up to \$5,000 for veterinary care of animal victims and up to \$2,000 for restoration of veterinary infrastructure. Louisiana veterinarians may apply for grants or loan guarantees from the state VMAs Dr. Walter J. Ernst Jr. Veterinary Memorial Foundation.

The AVMF and Walter J. Ernst foundation also are accepting monetary donations. Additional information about grants and donations is available at [www.lvma.org/wjefoundation.html](http://www.lvma.org/wjefoundation.html) and [www.avmf.org](http://www.avmf.org).

### **FDA appoints new director of minor-use, minor-species drugs**

The Food and Drug Administration Center for Veterinary Medicine has appointed Dr. Margaret Oeller as director of the Office of Minor Use and Minor Species Animal Drug Development, effective July 6. She had been acting director since Dr. Bernadette Dunham left the MUMS office to become CVM director.

Dr. Oeller graduated from Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine in 1989. She joined the CVM in 1993 as a reviewer in the Office of New Animal Drug Evaluation, Division of Therapeutic Drugs for Food Animals. Since 1998, she has worked as an expert regulatory review scientist on minor-use and minor-species issues. She moved to the MUMS office following its establishment several years ago.

### **Phi Zeta presents research awards for 2008**

Phi Zeta, the international honor society of veterinary medicine, recently presented two awards for research manuscripts.

Dr. Kim Johnson received the 2008 Phi Zeta Research Award in the Basic Sciences Category. The Phi Chapter at the University of Missouri-Columbia submitted Dr. Johnson's manuscript "Galectin-3 as a potential therapeutic target in tumors arising from malignant endothelia."

Dr. Patricia Sura received the 2008 Phi Zeta Research Award in the Clinical Sciences Category. The Phi Chapter at the University of Tennessee submitted Dr. Sura's manuscript "Comparison of 99mTcO<sub>4</sub> transplenic portal scintigraphy with per rectal portal scintigraphy for diagnosis of portosystemic shunts in dogs."

The awards consist of a plaque and a check in the amount of \$1,000.

Phi Zeta has chapters at 28 U.S. veterinary colleges and at St. George's University in Grenada. Each chapter conducts a local competition and then submits its winning manuscript to the Phi Zeta Research Awards Committee. The senior author of the manuscript need not be a Phi Zeta member but must be a veterinarian who has participated



in a graduate or residency training program within the past two years.

## From the AVMA

### The votes are in for AVMA councils and HAC

In New Orleans, the House of Delegates elected 15 AVMA members to fill vacancies on councils. The HOD also elected one of its members to fill a vacancy on the House Advisory Committee.

### Council on Biologic and Therapeutic Agents

Dr. Richard J. Forfa, Beallsville, Md., representing private clinical practice, predominantly equine; and Dr. Edward J. Javorka, Hobart, Ind., representing private clinical practice, predominantly small animal

### Council on Communications

Dr. Elizabeth "Betsy" Charles, San Marcos, Calif., representing private practice, predominantly equine; and Dr. Natalie Marks, Chicago, representing members at large (temporarily reclassified from private practice, predominantly food animal)

### Council on Education

Dr. Jayne E. Jensen, Issaquah, Wash., representing private small animal clinical practice; Dr. Margaret Root Kustritz, St. Paul, Minn., representing small animal clinical science; and Dr. D. Glen Esplin, Salt Lake City, representing non-private practice, nonacademic veterinary medicine

### Council on Public Health and Regulatory Veterinary Medicine

Dr. Bonnie J. Buntain, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, representing members at large; and Dr. Alicia D. Anderson, Atlanta, representing public health agencies or the armed forces

### Council on Research

Drs. Kevin M. Lewis, Round Lake, Ill., and K.C. Kent Lloyd, Davis, Calif., representing veterinary medical research

### Council on Veterinary Service

Drs. John C. Davis, Walsenburg, Colo., and John Howe, Grand Rapids, Minn., representing members at large

(temporarily reclassified from private mixed practice, predominantly food animal or equine, and private practice, exclusively equine)

### Judicial Council

Colonel Donald L. Noah, Alexandria, Va., and Dr. David G. Beauchamp, Leland, N.C., representing members at large

### House Advisory Committee

Dr. Daniel E. LaFontaine, Columbia, S.C., delegate for the American Association of Food Hygiene Veterinarians, representing federal or state government salaried veterinarians

### GHLIT to promote benefits of pet health insurance

The AVMA Group Health and Life Insurance Trust, as part of a strategic alliance with Aetna, will help equip veterinarians with a comprehensive understanding of pet health insurance.

Aetna, provider of the human health network for GHLIT, has partnered with Pets Best Insurance to offer health insurance policies for cats and dogs. Aetna will underwrite the policies, Pets Best will administer the policies, and the Trust will promote the benefits of pet health insurance.

Aetna and Pets Best have received an exclusive GHLIT endorsement, and a Trust advisory council will provide input to the companies about the direction that veterinarians want pet health insurance to take.

The Trust and Aetna announced the alliance in July at the AVMA Annual Convention. But some organizations and individuals have reacted with concern about the genesis of the arrangement.

Dan Fishbein, MD, Aetna's head of new product businesses, said Aetna and GHLIT discovered a mutual interest in pet health insurance during negotiations in 2007 for Aetna to provide the Trust's human health network. He said Aetna previously had conducted research on the market for pet health insurance.

Dr. Fishbein said Aetna researched companies offering pet health insurance and had confidential conversations with two of them. Aetna started talking with Pets Best in late summer 2007 and has since done substantial due diligence—the evaluation of a company before

a business transaction—according to Aetna and Pets Best.

In November 2007, the AVMA Executive Board approved amending the Trust's charter to encompass pet health insurance. The board has no role in day-to-day operations of the Trust but oversees the GHLIT charter and appoints the trustees.

Under the recent arrangements, GHLIT will receive 3 percent of the proceeds from Aetna-Pets Best sales of pet health insurance. The Trust will use most of the money for educational outreach to veterinarians, largely by distributing funds to state VMAs.

Aetna and Pets Best received permission to use the GHLIT logo in promotional materials as well as the phrase "in Partnership with the Health Insurance Trust of the American Veterinary Medical Association."

The Trust is forming an advisory council to handle the educational outreach and provide input to Aetna and Pets Best. Members of the advisory council likely will include representatives of small animal practice, specialty practice, critical care, and state VMAs.

### Education council schedules site visits

The AVMA Council on Education has scheduled site visits to schools/colleges of veterinary medicine at four institutions for the remainder of 2008.

Comprehensive site visits are planned for the University of Edinburgh Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, Oct. 19-23; University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, Nov. 2-6; and University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine, Dec. 7-11.

A focused site visit to the Tuskegee University School of Veterinary Medicine will be conducted Dec. 4-5.

The council welcomes written comments on these plans or the programs to be evaluated. Comments should be addressed to Dr. David E. Granstrom, Director, Education and Research Division, AVMA, 1931 N. Meacham Road, Suite 100, Schaumburg, IL 60173-4360. Comments must be signed by the person submitting them to be considered.