



Veterinary Research News

Public Health

One Health Commission incorporates to advance human and animal health

Humans, animals, and environments everywhere interact to share one health.

The One Health Initiative has promoted this one-health concept for several years. Now the One Health Commission has been launched to help address, more directly, interdisciplinary health issues in the United States and throughout the global village.

On June 29, the commission incorporated as a nonprofit organization. Its main mission is to increase cooperation among health professions and other groups to prevent and treat zoonotic diseases and other medical conditions common to humans and animals.

Key goals of the One Health Commission include creating an integrated strategy to improve public health and developing a research agenda relevant to one health.

Dr. Roger K. Mahr proposed the One Health Initiative and commission in July 2006 when he took office as AVMA president. The American Medical Association and American Society of Microbiology have been among the strong supporters.

The one-health concept has been percolating through portions of the scientific community in recent years, but the One Health Commission plans to extend awareness of the concept to the entire scientific community along with policymakers and the public.

The original One Health Initiative Task Force recommended holding a One Health Summit. The summit, which is currently on the schedule for this fall, will help launch the One Health Commission.

In addition, the task force recommended commissioning a study of

one health by the National Academies. The One Health Joint Steering Committee, which coordinated the transition from the task force to the commission, established contact with the National Academies about conducting such a study.

The One Health Commission also seeks to identify model projects that illustrate the value of applying the one-health concept, and the commission might consider creating additional demonstration projects. World Rabies Day is an example of a project that applies the one-health concept, teaching people about how vaccinating animals for rabies helps prevent rabies in humans.

The One Health Commission will engage international groups such as the World Health Organization, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization to extend U.S. efforts in one health globally.

From the AVMA

AVMA board acts to improve Web site, veterinary internships; approves specialty

The AVMA's electronic communications, the quality of veterinary internships, and a new specialty in amphibian and reptile practice were among the subjects of the June 4-6 Executive Board meeting.

The agenda included few big-ticket items. At the time of the meeting, the AVMA projected a deficit exceeding \$2.3 million for 2009, Treasurer Dr. Bret D. Marsh said. Journal advertising continues to be down, Dr. Marsh said, although membership renewals and convention registration have been strong. The AVMA saw a respectable 7 percent return on investments from January to the end of May.

The board directed AVMA staff to develop a business plan for redevelop-

ment of the AVMA Web site, www.avma.org.

J.B. Hancock, director of the AVMA Communications Division, said the most recent major updates to the site—restructuring the front page, changing the organization of the site, and adding a new Google search—were implemented in 2005. She noted that subsequent, smaller updates have been added consistently since then.

The current site, while replete with content, is difficult to navigate, according to member feedback. Making the site more interactive is part of the redevelopment initiative.

The board also reaffirmed its commitment to AVMA online discussion groups, on recommendation of the Member Services Committee. The current discussion groups, the Network of Animal Health, date to 1998. The Communications Division recently has been working to rebrand and reinvigorate NOAH. Barbara Baldwin, an assistant director of the Membership and Field Services Division, said NOAH might morph into newer forms of online communication.

Dr. Theodore J. Cohn, District IX board member, noted that NOAH could be a driver for the AVMA Web site and a way to increase communication between AVMA leaders and members.

On another recommendation from the MSC, the board approved \$5,000 for a pilot program to increase the diversity of recent graduates attending the AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference in January 2010. The funds will help cover the cost of attendance for five emerging leaders from backgrounds underrepresented in veterinary medicine.

The board approved spending \$8,800 toward a new Task Force on Veterinary Internships on recom-

mentation from the joint committee of the AVMA and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges. The task force will assess the status and overall quality of veterinary internships, which are currently not subject to oversight.

Dr. Gregory S. Hammer, AVMA immediate past president, noted that about 40 percent of new graduates are going into internships. He believes that some internships have less substance than they should—and that the situation won't improve on its own.

The AVMA, AAVMC, and American Association of Veterinary Clinicians will appoint representatives to the Task Force on Veterinary Internships. Each organization will pay travel expenses for its representatives, and the AVMA will host the meetings.

Reptile and Amphibian Practice has become the newest veterinary specialty. On recommendation of the Council on Education, the board granted provisional recognition to the specialty under the auspices of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners.

The Association of Reptile and Amphibian Veterinarians first petitioned the ABVP in 2006 to begin the process toward recognition of a reptile and amphibian specialty. Then, in 2007, it submitted a formal petition for recognition to the ABVS Committee on the Development of New Specialties. After a year for public comment, the American Board of Veterinary Specialties recommended the new specialty be granted provisional recognition under the ABVP.

The specialty in Reptile and Amphibian Practice will be developed in a manner similar to the existing eight veterinary specialties under the ABVP umbrella and will report to the ABVS as part of each annual report of the ABVP.

Internally, the Association is taking a more strategic approach to the travel of officers and other board members, who will spend less time on the road while still representing the AVMA at meetings and veterinary schools.

In April, the board had approved a number of recommendations to that

effect from the AVMA Task Force on Future Roles and Expectations. The final report of the task force noted that the time commitment required for officers and other board members has been increasing. Recommendations from the task force were aimed at reducing duplicative AVMA representation at meetings and strengthening the Association's relationship with veterinary students.

In June, the board approved most of the second set of recommendations from the task force.

The AVMA will turn a fledgling veterinary outreach program to law schools and the legal community into an ongoing activity. The board approved the State Advocacy Committee's recommendation to continue the Legal Outreach Program, at a cost of about \$7,000 annually.

The program, which began in April 2008, provides a veterinary perspective to the legal community on animal law issues. Veterinarians who have practiced in a clinical setting and attorneys familiar with this area provide law students, lawyers, and veterinary students with background information on the unintended consequences of awarding noneconomic damages.

Concerning veterinary education, three Council on Education members and one AVMA staff member will travel to Mexico to conduct a comprehensive site visit at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de México Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia. The board granted the travel request by the COE to examine the school's program, as a step toward accreditation. The site visit is anticipated for November.

The board approved a set of fees for graduates of AVMA-accredited colleges applying to take the Clinical Proficiency Examination to fulfill a state or provincial regulatory board requirement. The CPE is the fourth and final step of the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates certification program. Graduates of AVMA-accredited colleges will pay the same fees to take the CPE as candidates in the ECFVG program.

More details about board actions appear in the July 15 and Aug. 1 issues of *JAVMA News*.

Updated backgrounder: therapy dogs can be colonized with MRSA

Updates to a backgrounder on methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* incorporate recent research on colonization of therapy dogs that visit health care settings.

The AVMA and American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine backgrounder cites research that indicates the presence of MRSA in health care environments may put animals at risk of infection or colonization during their involvement in animal-assisted intervention programs and includes guidelines for handling animal-assisted intervention programs in health care settings.

One study cited in the backgrounder indicates that dogs that participated in animal-assisted programs in health care settings were six times as likely to become colonized with MRSA as were dogs that participated in non-health-care-related intervention programs.

The backgrounder also cites a separate study of 26 dog-handler teams in Ontario. *Clostridium difficile* and MRSA were not detected on the therapy dogs' forepaws or hair or on the hands of their handlers or the investigator prior to visiting long-term care facilities. *Clostridium difficile* was detected on one dog's paws following a visit to an acute care facility, and MRSA was detected on the hands of the investigator who petted a dog after it had visited a long-term care facility.

"These results suggest that therapy dogs may become infected with pathogens during their visits to health-care facilities and reinforces the importance of good hand hygiene before and after handling therapy animals," the backgrounder states.

The update includes information on a June 2009 report on MRSA in livestock, pets, and food. The joint report by the European Food Safety Authority, the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, and the European Medicines Agency concluded it is most effective to control MRSA transmission on the farm.

The report advocates for judicious use of antimicrobials in animals and

for avoiding use in animals of medicines of last resort for treatment of MRSA in humans.

The MRSA backgrounder is available at www.avma.org. Click on the dark blue "Reference" bar, then on "Animal health."

Revision process begins for AVMA euthanasia guidelines

Efforts to update the AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia are under way. The guidelines are a critically important document providing direction on acceptable procedures and agents that can be used to end an animal's life quickly and with as little pain and distress as possible.

Moreover, the AVMA guidelines are the basis for federal and state regulations concerning approved methods of humanely killing a wide range of animals, from pets and livestock to wildlife and laboratory animals.

This summer, 12 working groups comprising veterinary practitioners, scientists, animal control officers, academicians, and representatives from a host of other disciplines will begin communicating electronically to compile and sort through information on technique- or species-specific topics.

The working groups are a departure from the previous format used in 1999, when a panel of only 13 individuals convened to review and update the euthanasia guidelines. As many as 72 people appointed by the Animal Welfare Committee will participate in this latest endeavor, the outcome of which is intended to be a practical and more detailed document than the "Report of the 2000 AVMA Panel on Euthanasia" published in the *JAVMA* and the AVMA Web site.

Working groups are tasked with reviewing the current euthanasia guidelines to identify areas in need of updating. Assisted by Animal Welfare Division staff, the groups will conduct thorough assessments of peer-reviewed literature pertaining to their specific topic. Afterward, a panel, comprising the chairs of the individual working groups, will gather at AVMA headquarters to compile the working groups' reports into a draft document

that will be distributed for stakeholder comment. Once finalized, the guidelines will be submitted to the AVMA Executive Board for approval.

"I think we'll have a more thoughtful and well-considered report this time around," said the chair of the euthanasia guidelines panel, Dr. Steven L. Leary, assistant vice chancellor for Veterinary Affairs at Washington University School of Medicine, who served on the 1999 euthanasia panel.

More information is available now than nearly a decade ago. The latest iteration of the euthanasia guidelines will provide updated guidance regarding approaches that are already covered in the document, but consideration will also be given to new topics in euthanasia, including the use of euthanasia technicians and approaches to mass depopulation as in instances of disease outbreak and disaster.

Also new to this latest effort is the addition of an ethicist, who will advise the working groups and be a member of the panel. The inclusion of an ethicist, Dr. Leary explained, is an acknowledgement that while the euthanasia guidelines must be science-based, they must also be morally acceptable. That guidance will be provided by Raymond Anthony, PhD, an assistant professor in the philosophy department at the University of Alaska.

Dr. Leary expects the AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia will be finalized by the end of 2010.

Registration open for animal welfare symposium

Online registration for a symposium dedicated to animal welfare education and research is now open.

The AVMA and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges will host the 2009 Joint International Educational Symposium on Animal Welfare Nov. 9-11 at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center at Michigan State University, East Lansing. Organizers hope to provide an opportunity for veterinarians, educators, researchers, veterinary students, and others interested in animal welfare-related education and research to learn from

and network with experts in the field during the event.

The agenda for the symposium, "Swimming with the Tide: Animal Welfare in Veterinary Medical Education and Research," is available on the AVMA Web site at www.avma.org/avsymposium by clicking on the "Agenda" link.

Speakers from across the globe will touch on topics such as the way frameworks for animal welfare decisions are created by science, ethics, societal norms, and stakeholder engagement. The creation of successful educational and research environments that help veterinarians contribute to effective solutions for animal welfare problems will also be discussed. So will the history and current state of animal welfare education and research in the U.S. and internationally.

Among confirmed international speakers are Dr. David Bayvel, chair of The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Animal Welfare Working Group, and Dr. Nestor Tadich, dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Universidad Austral de Chile. Speakers from the U.S. include a former AVMA president and Texas A&M University professor, Dr. Bonnie V. Beaver, who will talk about post-DVM education regarding animal welfare. AVMA Executive Board member and Michigan State University professor, Dr. Janver Krehbiel, will discuss the AAVMC's Foresight Report and the implications for animal welfare that arise from the report's references to centers of excellence and tracking in the curriculum. Also, former Sen. Wayne Allard of Colorado will speak about grassroots efforts, running for office, and the news media, in relation to advocacy.

The event will include a poster session to facilitate networking and information sharing among attendees.

Log on to www.avma.org/avsymposium to register for the symposium or to learn more.

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 2009.

Comprehensive site visits are planned for the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, Sept. 13-17; Murdoch University School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, Perth, Western Australia, Sept. 27-Oct. 2; Calgary University Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Alberta, Canada, Oct. 25-29; and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, Mexico City, Mexico, Nov. 8-12.

The council welcomes written comments on these plans or the programs to be evaluated. Comments should be addressed to Dr. David E. Granstrom, Director, AVMA 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.

Research Results

Some *B. hinzii* strains cause disease in turkeys

Bordetella hinzii was thought to be nonpathogenic in poultry, but some strains were recently shown to cause respiratory disease in turkeys, according to the Department of Agriculture.

Bacterial isolates that were pathogenic in turkeys and identified in previous studies as *Bordetella avium* were reexamined and found to be *B. hinzii*. *Bordetella hinzii* was previ-

ously believed to be nonpathogenic because experimental infections had failed to cause disease in chickens and turkeys, according to the USDA Agricultural Research Service.

Karen Register, PhD, a microbiologist at the USDA-ARS National Animal Disease Center in Ames, Iowa, and Dr. Robert Kunkle, a veterinary medical officer at the center, infected turkeys with six genetically distinct strains of *B. hinzii* and found that four caused clinical disease. However, disease severity varied, and two of those four strains seemed to have low virulence.

The isolates did not cause disease in chickens infected during a related study, the ARS information states.

The study results were published in the March 2009 issue of *Avian Diseases*.

Proposals, Abstracts Invited

CRWAD seeks abstract submissions

The Conference of Research Workers in Animal Diseases is accepting abstract submissions for the 2009 CRWAD meeting, Dec. 6-8 in Chicago.

The deadline for submissions is Aug. 25. Abstract authors should indicate whether they plan an oral or poster presentation and their section preference. The sections are bacterial pathogenesis, biosafety and biosecurity, epidemiology and animal health economics, food and environmental safety, gastroenteric diseases, immu-

nology, respiratory diseases, vector-borne and parasitic diseases, and viral pathogenesis.

Graduate students may enter only one abstract for competition in one of the following categories: American Association of Veterinary Immunologists, American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists, American College of Veterinary Microbiologists, Association of Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, biosafety and biosecurity, and NC1007 enteric disease research.

Details about abstract submissions are at www.cvmb.colostate.edu/mip/crwad/authinst.htm.

Morris Animal Foundation calls for pilot-study proposals

Morris Animal Foundation now reviews proposals for pilot studies more than once a year to provide timely funding for innovative research relevant to the health of companion animals, horses, and wildlife.

August 31 is the next deadline for pilot-study proposals. The foundation has a particular interest during this cycle in pilot studies on dog overpopulation, heartworm in dogs and cats, cardiac disorders in Doberman Pinschers, and hip dysplasia in dogs.

The budget of pilot studies cannot exceed \$10,800—\$10,000 plus 8 percent for indirect costs—and studies cannot last longer than one year. Additional details and the online application are at www.morrisanimalfoundation.org/professionals/scientists. 