

ISVMA Lobby Day Rescheduled for April 1, 2009

The Fifth Annual ISVMA Lobby Day has been rescheduled and will now be held on April 1, 2009 in Springfield. The original date of April 8 conflicted with another event that would limit our participants' opportunities to meet with their legislators.

ISVMA members are strongly encouraged to join us for Lobby Day this year. We must work quickly to build strong relationships between veterinary professionals and legislators prior to ISVMA opening the Veterinary Medicine and Surgery Practice Act for amendments and renewal. ISVMA may open the Practice Act as early as 2010, so the 2009 legislative session is our last chance to build the relationship capacity we need to fend off organizations that would seek to limit the scope of practice and otherwise diminish the profession through hostile amendments to our Practice Act.

The ISVMA Lobby Day is a very rewarding experience. So far, every veterinarian that has attended in the past returns in succeeding years. ISVMA staff and lobbyists provide a comprehensive orientation and training session for participants before they go to the Capitol to meet with their legislators. We also provide talking points on the key issues on which we want you to lobby. You can leave the handouts with your legislators with a business card so that they know to contact you on issues related to animal and public health and welfare. ISVMA staff and lobbyists will also be at the Capitol all day to assist anyone that needs additional information or support.

If you plan to attend the Fifth Annual ISVMA Lobby Day please send a confirmation email to info@isvma.org. We really need your support.

Bovine TB Case Traced to Indiana Farm

INDIANAPOLIS (2 December 2008) - Staff of the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) is investigating a case of bovine tuberculosis (commonly called "TB," or more formally known as *Mycobacterium bovis*) in a beef cattle herd in Southeastern Indiana. The TB-positive cow was identified through routine testing at a meat processing facility in Pennsylvania.

BOAH veterinarians are in the very early stages of conducting a thorough investigation of the animal's movements within the state. Few details are currently known about the herd; as the investigation moves ahead, more information will be released.

Indiana has held a bovine tuberculosis-free status since 1984 with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Under federal guidelines, that status remains. The last time a Hoosier herd tested positive for the disease was in the 1970s.

Bovine tuberculosis is a chronic bacterial disease that affects primarily cattle, but can be transmitted to any warm-blooded animal. TB is difficult to diagnose through clinical signs alone. In the early stages of the disease, clinical signs are not visible. Later, signs may include: emaciation, lethargy, weakness, anorexia, low-grade fever and pneumonia with a chronic, moist cough. Lymph node enlargement may also be present. Cattle owners who notice these signs in their livestock should contact their private veterinarian.

Plague Found in Cat in New Mexico

Associated Press 12/10/2008

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. (AP) - Plague has been confirmed in a cat in Los Alamos, and the state Department of Health is urging New Mexicans to keep pets from hunting and take other precautions against the disease.

An Eddy County man who caught plague in January from hunting rabbits is New Mexico's sole case of human plague this year. Last year, New Mexico recorded five human cases, one of them fatal.

Plague is a bacterial disease of rodents generally transmitted to humans through the bites of infected fleas, but can be transmitted by direct contact with infected animals.

It was found earlier this year in cats and dogs in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and Bernalillo counties. Most of the pets recovered, although one cat developed pneumonic plague and died.

Prompt diagnosis and antibiotic treatment can greatly reduce the fatality rate. Symptoms of plague in humans include sudden fever, chills, headache and weakness. In most cases there also is a painful swelling of the lymph node in the groin, armpit or neck.

Symptoms in cats and dogs include fever, lethargy and loss of appetite, with possible swelling in the lymph node under the jaw.

"Most pets infected with plague are hunters who have eaten an infected rodent or been bitten by a rodent's fleas prior to getting ill," said Dr. Paul Ettestad, the Health Department's public health veterinarian.

Such pets also can bring fleas into the home, where they can infect people, he said. Eight people required antibiotics after being exposed to the cat with plague pneumonia, the department said.

Pneumonic plague occurs in the lungs. Septicemic plague, which occurs when the bacteria multiply in the blood, also can bring a high fever, abdominal pain and diarrhea.

The Health Department recommends avoiding sick or dead rodents and rabbits and their nests and burrows; treating pets with a flea control product and keeping them from roaming; and cleaning up areas near the house where rodents could live, such as wood piles or junk.

Preceding story courtesy of the AVMA

FDA: Ban on Animal Antibiotics Called Off

USAgNet - 12/11/2008

The Food and Drug Administration said it would continue to allow the widespread use of a class of powerful antibiotics in food-producing animals, making a last-minute reversal after referring to the practice a public-health risk in July.

The agency's bid this summer to ban many uses of cephalosporin drugs in cows, swine, chickens and other animals came under fire from the industry, reports The Wall Street Journal. Agriculture groups and animal-drug makers, including Pfizer Inc., said the antibiotics are needed to prevent many infectious diseases in animals.

Public-health officials and the American Medical Association are worried that excessive use of antibiotics - including in animals - can promote resistance and produce strains of bacteria that threaten human life. Cephalosporins treat respiratory diseases in cattle and swine but are also often given "off-label" for uses not approved by the FDA to poultry or more generally in livestock for non-approved infectious diseases.

On July 3, the FDA announced a planned crackdown on off-label uses in animals, citing "the importance of cephalosporin drugs for treating disease in humans."

That position was reiterated in September by the FDA's director of veterinary drugs, Steven Vaughn. Groups such as the Animal Population Health Institute, the Kansas Health Department and the National Turkey Federation, objected to the proposed ban. The American Veterinary Medical Association complained to the FDA that the data on the human impact it used to support the ban were flawed. On November 25, five days before the ban was to take effect, the FDA quietly revoked it with a notice in the Federal Register. The FDA's statement said the agency received many

comments and needed more time to review them. A spokeswoman said the agency still could impose restrictions later.

Preceding story courtesy of the AVMA

Advancing Our Federal Legislative Agenda in Tough Economic Times

from Dr. Mark Lutschaunig, Director of the AVMA Governmental Relations Division

\$700 Billion for the Troubled Asset Relief program; \$ 200 Billion to make more money available for consumer loans; \$600 Billion to buy mortgage-backed securities; \$500-1000 Billion economic stimulus package; \$1 Trillion budget deficit; \$10 Trillion federal debt. Would you believe that Times Square National Debt Clock has [run out of spaces](#)?!

I do not want to scare you with these numbers, but it helps to show what kind of environment we will face next year when we ask Congress and the Executive Branch to fund our programs.

At their November 2008 meeting, the AVMA Executive Board approved a Legislative Advisory Committee recommendation to prioritize the AVMA's funding requests. The top three funding priorities for the AVMA are the National Veterinary Medical Service Act (NVMSA), the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD), and the USDA Veterinary Accreditation Program. In addition, the AVMA will work with the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) to seek Section 1433 Formula Funds and funds for the School of Veterinary Medicine Grant Program.

The AVMA staff will lobby the Executive Branch and Congress for funding -- however, it won't be easy. Given the economic climate, it will be difficult to get funding increases for our programs, and we will have to work hard to maintain the funding that is already in place.

It will also be difficult to get funding for new programs, as this funding will have to come from an existing program to comply with Congress' "[PayGo](#)" rules. To comply with PayGo rules to fund a program, Congress must increase revenues (taxes) or provide an offset from existing funds. For example, in the Senate FY09 Agriculture Appropriations Bill, NVSMA appropriations increased to \$5M. However, Section 1433 Funds were eliminated to make up for the increase in NVMSA funding. A trade-off that is difficult to make because both of these programs are both priorities for the AVMA.

We will need your help to lobby your Members of Congress on the importance of funding these programs. Your help as an active member of the [Congressional Advocacy Network](#) (AVMA-CAN) and even is as an [All-Star Advocate](#) is more important than ever.

For more information, contact Dr. Mark Lutschaunig, Director of AVMA's Governmental Relations Division, at mlutschaunig@avma.org.

Request for Information: Compounding Pharmacies That Collect Illinois Sales Tax

ISVMA would like to compile a list of compounding pharmacies that are registered in the State of Illinois to collect state "sales" taxes. If you use a compounding pharmacy that collects the tax and remits it to the state, please let us know at info@isvma.org.

EPA, AVMA Team Up on Animal Pesticide Exposure Database

Feedstuffs by Sally Schuff 12/11/2008

The National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) has developed a Web site for veterinarians to report pesticide incidents involving animals. The new Web site is for use by veterinarians only and can be accessed through the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) [website](#).

The reporting site was developed by NPIC with input from the Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA)'s Pesticide Program, the AVMA's Clinical Practitioners Advisory Committee, and the Council on Biologic and Therapeutic Agents. The site was designed to capture the optimal amount of relevant information using a form that is quick for busy practitioners to fill out.

The data will be evaluated by EPA. Most of the reports of more severe pesticide-related incidents EPA receives are neurological or dermatologic in nature. The reports from veterinarians will help improve the quality of all animal incident data.

NPIC is a cooperative effort between Oregon State University and EPA. NPIC provides objective, science-based information about a variety of pesticide-associated subjects to the general public, health care providers, physicians, veterinarians, as well as to local, state and federal agencies.

About the Photo

The Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) is the most familiar mimid in the United States. It is known for its long, complex songs that include imitations of many other birds. Occasionally, a particularly talented bird will even imitate sirens, truck back-up alarms, bells, or other sounds. A Northern Mockingbird continues to add new sounds to its song repertoire throughout its life.

The Northern Mockingbird is a loud and persistent singer. It sings all through the day, and often into the night. Most nocturnal singers are unmated males, which also sing more than mated males during the day. Nighttime singing is more common during the full moon. In well-lit areas around people, even mated males may sing at night.

The female Northern Mockingbird sings too, although usually more quietly than the male does. She rarely sings in the summer, usually only when the male is away from the territory. She sings more in the fall, perhaps to establish a winter territory.

The Northern Mockingbird typically sings throughout most of the year, from February through August, and again from September to early November. A male may have two distinct repertoires of songs: one for spring and another for fall. One study found only a one percent overlap in song types used in spring and fall.

The Northern Mockingbird frequently gives a "wing flash" display, where it half or fully opens its wings in jerky intermediate steps, showing off the big white patches. No one knows why it does this behavior, but some have suggested that it startles insects into revealing themselves. However, it does not appear to flush insects, and other mockingbird species that do not have white wing patches use the display, casting doubt on this idea.

The Northern Mockingbird is resident from southern Canada southward to southern Mexico and the Caribbean. It is found in areas with open ground and shrubby vegetation, such as in parkland, cultivated land, and suburbs. It forages on ground for fruit and insects and is often found on conspicuous perches. It picks fruit while perched on branches, but may occasionally hover to get some fruit.

I photographed this Northern Mockingbird in Pharr, Texas in December 2002.

Contact Us

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If you wish to add your name to the recipient list, send an e-mail to info@isvma.org and ask to receive the E-SOURCE newsletter.

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