

ISVMA Convention Registration Is Available Online

The ISVMA Annual Convention is being held at the Westin Yorktown Center in Lombard, IL on November 7-9, 2008. The printed prospectus (with detailed program descriptions and a registration form) will be mailed in the next several days. However, you have a chance to get an early jump on your colleagues and [register today!](#)

Early registration is strongly recommended if you wish to participate in one of the nine (9) wet labs being offered. The ISVMA wet labs have been very popular and sell out quickly. A description of each of the wet labs is available on the online registration form. ISVMA is still securing contracts and session descriptions from speakers; however, we have created a [list of speakers and topics](#) that we have already confirmed.

ISVMA has built a reputation for providing a high-quality, affordable and accessible continuing education program for its members. The ISVMA Annual Convention is the highlight of our education program and the ISVMA Education Planning Committee has put together a program based upon the expressed needs and desires of our membership. We have recruited well-known, highly-rated speakers to address topics that are relevant and important to you and your practice. The wet-labs have expanded each of the last three years and we are now offering them on all three days of the convention.

The increased requirements for CE in Illinois make it even more important that ISVMA continue to provide a high quality, affordable and accessible CE program for its members. You and your staff can attend the ISVMA Annual Convention without the high cost of airfare, extended hotel stays, and costly per diems. You can also **FULFILL YOUR ENTIRE CE REQUIREMENT** by attending the ISVMA Annual Convention each year.

We know that you have many options to meet your CE requirements. We hope that you will support ISVMA by attending our convention - it is for you!

Human-use Rabies Vaccine Supply Woes Continue

(From AVMA - Schaumburg, Ill.) State and federal authorities, along with vaccine manufacturers, have been restricting human-use vaccines for rabies since May, when it became clear the nation's two vaccine suppliers couldn't keep up with historical demand.

Dr. Richard Franka, a microbiologist for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 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.

Sanofi Pasteur, one of the nation's two main suppliers of human-use rabies vaccine, did not have vaccine available at press time. The other main supplier, Novartis, was requiring risk assessments and confirmation codes from public health officials before releasing doses, and higher than expected rate of use could limit near-term availability of that company's post-exposure prophylaxis, according to an Aug. 22 CDC update sent to clinicians.

"The CDC strongly recommends that health care providers, state and local public health authorities, animal control officials, and the public take immediate steps to ensure appropriate use of human rabies biologics," the Aug. 22 update says, later adding, "Judicious and appropriate use of rabies vaccines is crucial to avert a situation in which persons exposed to rabies are put at increased risk due to depleted vaccine supplies."

Supplies of rabies vaccine fell after Sanofi Pasteur started renovations in June 2007 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.

Novartis Vaccines broke ground in May for a new rabies vaccine production facility in Germany, according to a company letter posted on the CDC's Web site. The plant will produce supplies for the U.S. and it is expected to be operational in 2011, the letter says.

An Aug. 11 announcement from the CDC indicated Sanofi Pasteur may have vaccine available by late September or early October. Novartis is expected to have more doses available in October.

"We think things are going to get better," Dr. Franka said. "But since there are only two manufacturers providing vaccine for the U.S. market and there is no storage or reserve, we cannot be sure."

Dr. Charles Rupprecht, chief of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's rabies program, said the nation should have a vaccine reserve plan in place. But he said such a concept would need considerable support to get past fiscal restraints and public perception of rabies as primarily an animal issue.

EPA Asks for Comment on Upcoming Survey on Unused Pharmaceutical Disposal

(From AVMA - Schaumburg, Ill.) The Environmental Protection Agency is seeking comment on a survey it plans to conduct on disposal methods of unused pharmaceuticals by the health care industry.

The EPA in an Aug. 12 Federal Register notice announced the draft survey and other supporting documents, which can be found on the agency's Web site, www.epa.gov/guide/304m/ or from the federal online docket www.regulations.gov/, Docket No. EPA-HQ-OW-2008-0517. There is a questionnaire pertaining to veterinary hospitals.

The EPA is asking stakeholders to comment on specific aspects of the upcoming survey and its scope. The information compiled from the completed survey will be used in a detailed study on how veterinary hospitals, human hospitals, long-term care facilities, and hospices dispose of their unused pharmaceuticals. All of them will be surveyed.

The EPA is in the process of distinguishing between veterinary hospitals and other veterinary facilities such as offices. As a result, the agency is seeking feedback on whether to include veterinary offices, medical and dental offices, university clinics, and prison clinics.

The purpose of the study will be to inform future regulatory actions, and identify the best management and proper disposal practices. For many years, this involved flushing products down the toilet or drain.

The study will be one of several actions the agency is taking to strengthen its understanding of disposal practices and potential risks from pharmaceuticals in water. Essentially, it is part of the EPA's overall strategy to address the risks associated with emerging contaminants, which can be viewed at <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/ppcp/>.

The agency also will conduct a series of meetings in September to solicit early feedback from stakeholders on the draft survey. The date and time of the meetings, which will have conferencing capability, will be announced in coming weeks.

Comments on the draft survey must be submitted to the EPA on or before Nov. 10.

To enter comments, data, or information for the "Study of Unused Pharmaceuticals from Medical and Veterinary Facilities," go to www.regulations.gov/ and follow the online instructions for submitting comments or e-mail OW-Docket@epa.gov, Attention Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2008-0517.

Comments also may be sent to Water Docket, Environmental Protection Agency, mailcode: 4203M, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20460.

The AVMA also comments on regulatory proposals on behalf of the profession and will analyze and comment on this proposal.

For more information about the draft form and the forthcoming survey, contact Carey Johnston at Johnston.Carey@epa.gov or Jan Goodwin at Goodwin.Janet@epa.gov.

About the Photo

The [Brown-headed Cowbird](#) is a small blackbird with glossy brown head, heavy bill, and dark eyes. Its black body has a faint green sheen. It walks on ground to forage and holds its tail cocked over back. It feeds primarily on caterpillars, insects, spiders, fruits, grains and seeds. It has a swift direct flight with rapid wing beats.

Brown-headed cowbirds are the only brood parasites common across North America. They deposit their eggs in nests belonging to birds of other species. The cowbird eggs typically hatch earlier than their host's eggs which gives them a competitive advantage over the other hatchlings. Its habit of nest parasitism can cause the decline of species with small populations, such as Kirtland's Warbler and Black-capped Vireo. Some of the birds they parasitize remove the eggs from their nests or cover them with new nest material so that they are not incubated.

Originally a bison-following bird of the Great Plains, the Brown-headed Cowbird spread eastward in the 1800s as forests were cleared. It is a common bird across most of North America, but numbers are declining in most areas. It Breeds throughout much of southern Canada and the United States. It spends winters in central and southern parts of breeding range as well as in Florida. Its preferred habitat consists of agricultural lands, fields, woodland edges, and suburban areas.

I'm not a big fan of Brown-headed Cowbirds because of the damage they have done to many native songbird species. However, this is a species that is heavily studied and provides a valuable insight into the unintended damage caused by development and habitat destruction. When North America was covered in great forests, the Brown-headed Cowbird's parasitic habits had a more limited impact on other native bird species. However, as the great forests were replaced by agricultural land, the Brown-headed Cowbird began to have a much more significant impact. Songbirds that used to nest deep in forests were now exposed to the very woodland edges that Brown-headed Cowbirds prefer.

I photographed this Brown-headed Cowbird in Portal, AZ in May 2008.

Contact Us

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