

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- New Employees
- Hurricane Simulation
- Governor's Conference
- State Vet Update
- First Aid/CPR Training

## MART Summit a Success



ASPCA's Joe Elmore speaks at Summit.

Training, training, training. We can never have enough. For this reason the Mississippi Animal Response Team held a summit May 16th-17th at Eagle Ridge Conference Center in Raymond to receive training on various topics.

There was too much information provided to fit inside a small newsletter article. If you missed the summit, you truly missed a great event filled with superb speakers that provided us with invaluable tools concerning disaster response. Topics included animal handling, the Incident Command System, disaster Psychology, large animal response, and VIPR inclusion. The ASPCA provided valuable information on puppy mills, and 20 people were taught pet first aid/CPR. We, of course, offered human first aid/CPR too.

We learned more about the Mississippi Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps, what we all need to pack in our go-bags, and the scoop on what to expect when arriving on a disaster scene. There was also great food, networking and everyone received a backpack of goodies.

**Special thanks to our sponsors - the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, ASPCA, Petfinder.com, and the Medical Reserve Corps.**

Beth Adcock  
MART Coordinator

MART members take the stage to participate in an Incident Command System scenario at the MART Summit.



# MBAH Hires New Employees



Jeffrey Graham graduated from MSU with a BS in poultry science. He has worked in the poultry field since 1993. He and his wife, Katie, have a son Tanner and a daughter Abbey. They live in the Dixie community of Forrest County. Jeffrey may be reached at 601-832-3353.



Justin Pettway has been hired as a Livestock Inspector for the Mississippi Board of Animal Health. He formerly worked at Tadlock Stockyards in Forest. He spends his free time with his horses and cattle, and for fun he calf ropes. He and his wife, Jackie, live in Pelahatchie. Justin may be reached at his pager number 1-800-489-3535 3071.



Jesse Carter graduated from the MSU Animal and Dairy Sciences Department in 2005. Upon graduating he went to work for Prestage Farms of Mississippi. He then returned to MSU and graduated with a Master's degree in Veterinary Science in 2008. When not working, he enjoys hunting, fishing and spending time with his family. He is married, with two daughters, and lives in Columbus. Jesse may be reached at 769-798-1654.

## “I Care for Animals” Update

The Mississippi “I Care for Animals” Car Tag Program provides money to animal welfare organizations throughout the state which have animal welfare needs. An emphasis is placed on spay and neuter programs.

The “I Care For Animals” Car Tag program allows Mississippians to purchase a special license plate for an additional \$31, the proceeds from which help homeless, injured and abused animals in humane shelters and rescue programs across the state. Twenty-five dollars from each tag goes into a state animal care fund which is distributed to city and county animal shelters and rescue organizations which make application and meet the criteria for award. To date the program has awarded over \$300,000 to organizations with spay/neuter and other animal-welfare-related programs.

Another way to contribute to the “I Care for Animals” program is to make a donation. Checks should be mailed to the Mississippi Board of Animal Health, Attn: I Care for Animals Program, P.O. Box 3889, Jackson, MS 39207.



### Preparing for Evacuation with Pets:

If you are required to evacuate, please take your pet with you. If the situation is dangerous for you then it is also dangerous for your pet. It is often unknown how long an evacuation will be and it may be dangerous to return to an area to check on or retrieve pets left behind. Identify evacuation routes and sheltering sites prior to an emergency. Pet friendly emergency shelters are being established but it is best to find alternative sheltering if possible. If you have exotic pets or pets that require intensive medical care, it is recommended that you find a veterinary clinic in which to board your animals through the duration of the event. Information on pet friendly shelters, pet friendly hotels and motels, and veterinary clinics can be found on the Mississippi Board of Animal Health website at [www.mbah.state.ms.us](http://www.mbah.state.ms.us).

## Hurricane Wendi - A MEMA Exercise

Are we prepared for Hurricane Season 2009? That's the question Mike Womack, the director of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), was asking.

In order to assist state agencies and other groups to evaluate hurricane preparedness, MEMA held a one-day hurricane exercise on May 12<sup>th</sup> appropriately named Hurricane Wendi. Emergency Support Function-11 (ESF-11) was represented by the emergency management group of the Mississippi Board of Animal Health (MBAH) and was supported by personnel from the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) and the Mississippi State University Extension Service (ES).

The scenario for the exercise began twelve hours post-landfall of Hurricane Wendi, a category 4 storm in Jackson County. MBAH and MDAC personnel manned the ESF-11 desk at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Pearl prepared to receive animal and agricultural requests from counties that would be affected by the strong storm. Not only was the SEOC activated, but the forward command post of the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) in Gulfport was called out. This group serves as the Emergency Operations Center for the lower six coastal counties. MBAH and ES emergency personnel operated the SERT ESF-11 desk that opens well in advance of a hurricane and services animal and agricultural requests from the six coastal counties.

**The purpose of the exercise is to provide real-time activities and requests to occur just as they would during an actual hurricane event.** What resources are available to respond to requests? Do we have the manpower and equipment to respond appropriately? Do we have enough trained volunteers to operate the pet shelters? Are ESF-11 personnel sufficiently trained to utilize WebEOC, the computer software used by MEMA, to request and track resources? These are just a few of the issues that were addressed during the exercise.

Hurricane Wendi was just a test, but exercises such as this will improve our planning, training, and response to a real hurricane.

If you would like to volunteer to assist the MBAH during a hurricane or other natural disaster, please complete a MART Membership and Code of Conduct form and send to:

Mississippi Board of Animal Health, Attention: Beth Adcock, PO Box 3889, Jackson, MS 39207  
or email: [Beth@mdac.state.ms.us](mailto:Beth@mdac.state.ms.us)

Ronnie White  
Emergency Coordinator

# National Governor's Conference



Dr. Brigid Elchos meets "Vader" an Explosives Detection Canine.

"Vader" is accompanied by his handler, Sgt. Lee Jordan, with the MS Highway Patrol.

The MS Veterinary Strike Team (MVST) of the MS Animal Response Team, composed of private practitioner volunteers, College of Veterinary Medicine personnel, senior veterinary students, and MS Board of Animal Health (MBAH) employees, were activated to support security activities for the National Governor's Conference (NGC). The NGC was hosted by Governor Barbour on the Mississippi Gulf Coast from July 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>. The MVST was deployed for five days to provide veterinary care for the Explosives Detection Canines that searched designated facilities prior to NGC events.

This was the first pre-planned deployment of the MVST; all other deployments have been in response to hurricane events in the state. This deployment contributed greatly to our learning and experience, as well as to our visibility as a profession. Because it was pre-planned we were able to be more organized and prepared than has been previously possible. This deployment moved us forward in great strides towards building first-rate emergency veterinary medical capabilities. This was entirely a team effort. Without the participation of many agencies and individuals, the success of this deployment would not have been possible. It is with deep appreciation that we thank the following,

### The College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM)

Many thanks to the following for participating in this team effort:

- Dean Hoblet who has supported every request the MBAH has made regarding efforts towards emergency preparedness and response.
- Dr. Carla Huston who provided an invaluable service for this event as the Veterinary Services Branch Director. Dr. Huston personally organized the scheduling and deployment of the private veterinary personnel, as well as worked tirelessly with Terri Snead to prepare the veterinary medical supplies and equipment. Her expertise and knowledge were key to the success of the deployment. Dr. Huston was not only involved in the preparedness, she also deployed for the entire event.
- Dr. Phil Bushby, Shannon Vawter, and Katie Ebers who volunteered their time and expertise for the entire deployment. These key CVM personnel transported the CVM's Veterinary Mobile Clinic to the Gulf Coast and then provided on-site and off-site veterinary care as needed.

### Private Practitioners

The primary goal of the Veterinary Strike Team is to utilize the knowledgeable and capable veterinarians we have residing in the state for any emergencies that we may be faced with, be they man-made or natural. These private practitioners have all been trained through MART and volunteered their time to participate in this deployment exercise. We are very grateful for the participation of:

Dr. Jim Perkins, luka  
Dr. Charlie West, Bay St. Louis

Dr. Betsy Lipscomb, Port Gibson  
Dr. Lisa Sharp, Batesville

In appreciation, they received uniforms and day kits in case of further deployment of the team. They will be the first individuals called upon should there be an emergency. Their participation does not in any way obligate them for further deployments. For more information on how to join the MSVST, contact Dr. Carla Huston ([Huston@cvm.msstate.edu](mailto:Huston@cvm.msstate.edu)) or Dr. Brigid Elchos ([Brigid@mdac.state.ms.us](mailto:Brigid@mdac.state.ms.us)).

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# National Governor’s Conference Continued...

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**MBAH**

The MBAH deployed a recreational trailer to serve as a command post. Ronnie White and Beth Adcock made sure that it had all the logistical supplies needed for the responders. For this I was extremely grateful because in addition to planning, I spent the time on the coast serving as the Liaison Officer and so was a direct recipient of their expertise and thoughtfulness. I personally want to thank Dr. Watson for supporting the development of the MVST and for authorizing our participation in this event. It provided a wonderful opportunity to network with other agencies and to raise the visibility of the value of our profession.

On a final note, the handlers of these canines take extremely good care of their animals, for they are priceless – both professionally and personally. However, several of the handlers brought their canines by the Veterinary Mobile Clinic for minor veterinary services. This allowed our team to briefly interact with these extremely intelligent and well-trained canines. For instance, we learned that some of these canines can detect up to 19,000 explosive odor combinations! We were all grateful to be available should one of the canines need veterinary care and are extremely thankful that the care was not required. The MBAH is grateful to the Department of Public Safety/Office of Homeland Security for involving us in this activity; and, to the Explosives Detection Canine Handlers for their support and appreciation of our efforts.

Brigid Elchos, DVM  
Deputy State Veterinarian



The MART Strike Team at the National Governor’s Conference.

L to R: Dr. Carla Huston, Dr. Phil Bushby, Beth Adcock, Dr. Brigid Elchos, Shannon Vawter, and Katie Ebers.

Front: Dr. Lisa Sharp

# State Veterinarian Update

So far 2009 has been a really busy year for the Board of Animal Health. For instance, we've been involved in disease outbreak response, adjusting to program changes and enhancing collaborative relationships.

We started the year with a Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) outbreak in the United States that has ultimately involved quarantining and testing 2 stallions and 6 mares in Mississippi. CEM is a venereal disease of horses that normally does not occur in the United States. The disease was discovered on a breeding facility in Kentucky and the investigation spread to 48 states involving 986 horses. To date, 21 stallions and 5 mares have been confirmed as positive. One of the unusual aspects of this disease investigation was that the spread was due to the use of shipped semen which facilitated the spread of this disease to many states in a short period of time. Every farm that stood multiple stallions had a high percentage of these stallions become infected as a result of poor sanitation of breeding equipment as well as the phantom used to collect the stallions. Fortunately, the disease is treatable, so once the horses are identified they can be treated and cleared.

**A collaborative project many of you may be unaware of is a program that provides veterinary care to Junior Livestock exhibitors during the State Fair and Dixie National Livestock Show.** Commissioner Spell established this about 4 years ago, and for the past year and a half, the College of Veterinary Medicine has sent instructors and students to provide the veterinary care. We now have a cattle chute as well as a remodeled storage room which serves as a base of operations and a place for equipment storage. It has been a great learning experience for the veterinary students and provides a great chance for the youth to be exposed to veterinary medicine. We're located just across the hall from the judging arena, so come by and visit if you're on the Jackson fair grounds during these events.

## **MBAH Program Disease Updates:**

### **Brucellosis**

The United States is free from bovine brucellosis, with the exception of the Yellowstone National Park area. Periodically the states of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho lose their free status as a result of exposure to infected elk or bison that migrate out of the part. As a result of this progress in the eradication program, the US Department of Agriculture has stopped financially supporting the testing of brucellosis in states that have been free of brucellosis for longer than 5 years. Unfortunately, this loss of federal funding for our 1st Point Testing Program coincided with the decline in the economy and a decrease in state revenues resulting in a budget cut for the Board of Animal Health. As a result, we will discontinue 1st Point Testing in August, and private testing for brucellosis will become the responsibility of the cattlemen.

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# State Veterinarian Update Continued...

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We have an arrangement with the Alabama Diagnostic Laboratory to perform these tests for anyone wanting a herd certification or change of ownership test. Please contact our office for information about shipping samples to that laboratory. We will continue to support calfhood vaccination of in-state heifers.



## Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA)

For the first time since we have been keeping records, we have gone 12 months without a positive EIA horse! It wasn't many years ago that we were finding 70-80 positive horses a year, so this is quite an achievement for our state. The EIA Law passed in 2001 requiring most horses in the state to have a Coggins Test annually, has been largely responsible for an increase in testing and identification of infected horses.

## Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)/West Nile Virus (WNV)

The four week period from late June to July resulted in as many cases of EEE as we had the entire year during 2008. **At this pace, it seems 2009 is going to be an especially active year for encephalitis cases.** Please remember to report all positive tests that were not performed at the Mississippi Veterinary Diagnostic and Research Laboratory. You can keep up with new cases by going to our website at [www.mbah.state.ms.us](http://www.mbah.state.ms.us) and look under the tab "Disease Programs" for "EEE and WNV."

## Regulatory Update:

Don't forget to check with states of destination about current export requirements. Recently Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas implemented new Trichomonas requirements for cattle. The vesicular stomatitis outbreaks in Texas and New Mexico this summer have caused changes in states (including Mississippi's) import requirements as well. For your clients that show in the South East, Equine Passports are available that will allow movement between states on the list for 6 months. Please call our office for the list of states and instructions.

## Equine Piroplasmiasis Alert:

**There has been a growing concern that Equine Piroplasmiasis has the possibility of becoming established in the U.S.** The disease is a tick-borne protozoal infection of horses that was eradicated in the 1980's and considered to be an exotic disease in the United States. In 2008 Florida experienced an outbreak and earlier this year Missouri experienced an outbreak as well. The disturbing factor in both outbreaks was the link to race horses coming into the US illegally from Mexico. There seems to be a growing trend for "Bush Tracks" where horse racing and gambling occur. The two recent outbreaks were both traced to the practice of "blood doping." This is where blood is collected from one horse and the red cells are then injected into another horse to supposedly improve racing performance. A recent alarming factor is the disappearance of 3 of these horses while under quarantine. Also, there has long been suspicion that a percentage of the horses imported into the United States from endemic countries prior to 2005 have been horses allowed into the country as a false negative for piroplasmiasis. The older complement fixation test in use prior to 2005 is known to miss some horses that are carriers. Please keep this disease in mind, especially if you have clients that participate in high risk activities such as racing in unsanctioned events. Please check our website for information about this disease.

Jim Watson, DVM  
State Veterinarian

## Novel H1N1 (“Swine” Flu) Outbreak

Even though there is not as much public media attention on the novel influenza outbreak, it is continuing to be transmitted person-to-person. Importantly, there have been no cases of this novel influenza found in swine in the United States to date. Mississippi has had over 413 human cases, distributed throughout the state. More information about the cases in Mississippi can be found on the Mississippi State Department of Health’s (MSDH) website at [www.msdh.state.ms.us](http://www.msdh.state.ms.us) and information about the current investigation and follow-up nationally can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). The most important information about influenza is how to prevent it. The following guidance comes from the MSDH website:

### If You Are Sick:

If you have symptoms of influenza (fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue), **contact your doctor**. Your medical provider can best advise you on actions to take, and whether an office visit is needed. All forms of influenza are contagious, so if you are sick, stay home to protect others from illness.

To date, symptoms of swine flu in the U.S. have been mild. However, the chronically ill, the very young, pregnant women and seniors can be at greater risk for serious illness. Swine flu responds well to antiviral medication, which can reduce the severity and duration of the flu when taken at the onset of symptoms.

**Do not use aspirin** for fever with children or teenagers 18 years of age or younger. Aspirin with viral infections can cause [Reye's syndrome](#), a life-threatening illness. Products which contain aspirin include Alka-Seltzer, Anacin, Ascriptin, BC Powder, Bufferin, Excedrin, Kaopectate, Maalox Total Stomach Relief, Pamprin, Pepto-Bismol, Vanquish and YSP. Check labels carefully, and do not use these products or others that contain aspirin. For fever in those 18 and under, **use a non-aspirin product** such as Tylenol (acetaminophen).



### Protecting Yourself

**Wash your hands** often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective. **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose or mouth to prevent the spread of germs. **Avoid close contact** with those who are ill. To protect others, **cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

### Protecting Others

**Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you get sick, CDC recommends that you **stay home** from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.



The Board of Animal Health employees, along with a few of our USDA and Extension friends, went through the American Heart Association's basic first aid and CPR training.

We realize the importance of cross-training on both human and animal issues and felt these classes were a must for our team. After a major disaster hits, Board of Animal Health employees perform farm assessments within the impacted area. Many times our teams are first on the scene at these farms; therefore, we need the basic first aid/CPR skills.

We appreciate Eddie Ivy, Training Coordinator for the City of Meridian, for his great teaching skills.

## Farm ID Important During A Disaster

Hurricane season is upon us again and many of us have gone about preparing for the worst but we all hope for the best. In preparing you probably gathered items such as flash lights and batteries and radios, food and water and the likes. There is also one more preparation you may want to consider. The Mississippi Disease and Disaster Preparedness Program offers producers the opportunity to register their farm with the Board of Animal Health. Depending on the emergency, the supplies you gathered may not be sufficient to get you through the aftermath. When you register your farm in the program you are assuring yourself that someone knows where you are and they will be checking on you in an emergency.

By registering your farm you open a line of communication with the Board of Animal Health that could prove to be an invaluable lifeline in an emergency situation. The Mississippi Disease and Disaster Preparedness Program is focused on the livestock industry. The Board of Animal Health understands that whether your farm is a hobby or your livelihood, it and your animals are valuable to you. The focus of the program is to provide needed assistance in a disease or disaster situation when a local response is not sufficient. The goal of the program is to be in communication with as many producers as possible as quickly as possible to keep the negative results of an emergency to a minimum. Assistance may be delayed or not received if your whereabouts are not known. When you register your farm you will be put on a list of contacts kept by the Board of Animal. In case of a natural disaster or a disease outbreak this list is accessed to contact producers in a timely fashion to help mitigate the circumstances as quickly as possible.

The Board of Animal Health would like to encourage you to register today if you have not done so already. **Communication with health officials could potentially save your farm and animals in a disease outbreak or natural disaster.** If you are interested in registering you can do so by several means. You can register online by going to the Mississippi Board of Animal Health website at [www.mbah.state.ms.us](http://www.mbah.state.ms.us), you can request a pamphlet to fill out by sending a request to Mississippi Board of Animal Health P.O. Box 3889 Jackson, MS 39207, or you can call at 1-888-646-8731.

Jesse Carter  
Animal Health Programs Coordinator



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**REMINDER:** All MART members are required to take National Incident Management System classes (ICS) IS-100, 200 and 700. You can find these online courses at <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslst.asp>. All ICS classes are free.

Please send me a copy of your certificate once you complete a class. I also highly encourage you to keep one notebook filled with any certificates you receive.

If you would like to take your Incident Command System classes (100, 200, 700) in a classroom setting instead of online you can take them at the following time:

**October 14-15      Meridian      FREE**

Class size is limited so please contact [beth@mdac.state.ms.us](mailto:beth@mdac.state.ms.us) if you want to take the class and we will connect you with the person who needs to get you registered.



Mississippi Board of Animal Health

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