



# MBAH News & Views

Mississippi Board of Animal Health

Dr. Jim Watson

Dr. Brigid Elchos

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2012

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- EHV
- Southern Animal Health Association
- Animal Rescue Training
- National Veterinary Stockpile Training
- Permits Needed to Move Wildlife

## State Veterinarian Update

**The spring has been a busy time for us here at the Board of Animal Health just as I'm sure it has been for you.** I remember the hectic pace of practice during this time of year delivering calves and foals as well as breeding season for mares. Here at the Board of Animal Health the spring brings the legislative session with all the animal related issues as well as our budget process. In addition, we had 4 positive EIA horses, tested a dairy herd for TB due to potential exposure from a TB positive farm hand that had extensive exposure to cattle in the milking parlor and are finalizing the EHV-1 outbreak. As last year's president of the Southern Animal Association, (a 14 state group, representing state and federal animal health officials), Mississippi was responsible for hosting the annual meeting in early May. I would like to thank my staff for the excellent job in organizing and staffing the event.



As many of you are aware, I have been serving in the Army Veterinary Reserve Corps for several years now and am on a 6 month deployment with an Agri-Business Development Team in Afghanistan. I expect to be back in the office around December 1st. While I am away, Dr. Brigid Elchos, our Deputy State Veterinarian, will be available to handle any issues or concerns that may arise in my absence.

### EHV-1 Outbreak Summary

The State Veterinarian's Office was notified by a practitioner on May 8th of a horse that had died due to undiagnosed neurological disease. Later that day another horse was seen by the same practice and had to be euthanized as a result of neurological disease. The carcass was sent to the diagnostic lab where they were able to confirm that the horse had Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy (EHM) due to EHV-1. Ultimately 6 horses were affected, 3 died or were euthanized and three have since recovered. It was quickly determined that these horses had all attended a trail ride in Tennessee 2 weeks previously. As a result of the prompt reporting by the local veterinarians, and the ability of our diagnostic laboratory to quickly identify and confirm the agent, we were able to isolate affected animals and confine exposed horses, preventing further spread of the disease. There were 4 cases in Tennessee which spread to an additional 2 horses and 1 case in Kentucky. This outbreak reinforces the importance of early reporting of disease and a diagnostic laboratory that can provide a prompt diagnosis. Just prior to the Dixie National Quarter Horse Show, I discussed the need for rapid diagnostics for EHV-1 with Dr. Lanny Pace and Dr. Alejandro Banda.

*Continued on next page...*

# State Vet Update continued...

*Continued from page one...*

EHV-1 and Neurological disease in horses are reportable conditions to the **State Veterinarian's** office.

They very quickly implemented PCR Tests to detect EHV-1 and to further screen for the neurological strain that causes EHM. While we didn't have to use it for the Dixie National it certainly proved it's worth for this outbreak. It seems that cases of EHM are on the rise, and we need to be prepared to react quickly. *As was demonstrated in this outbreak, the public gets very concerned, and it is important that we all work together to identify potential cases and get them reported and diagnosed immediately as rapid isolation of infected horses is an effective way to stop the spread of disease.*

For more information on EHV go to one of the following websites:

[Mississippi Board of Animal Health](http://www.mbah.state.ms.us/index.html)  
<http://www.mbah.state.ms.us/index.html>

[USDA Horse Biosecurity](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/content/printable_version/HorseBioSecurity_final.pdf)  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal\\_health/content/printable\\_version/HorseBioSecurity\\_final.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/content/printable_version/HorseBioSecurity_final.pdf)

[A Guide To Understanding the Neurologic Form of EHV Infection](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/equine_herpesvirus_brochure_2009.pdf)  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/equine\\_herpesvirus\\_brochure\\_2009.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/equine_herpesvirus_brochure_2009.pdf)

[USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service Resources](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/)  
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/>

[American Association of Equine Practitioners Fact Sheet](http://www.aaep.org/pdfs/control_guidelines/Equine%20Herpes%20Virus.pdf)  
[http://www.aaep.org/pdfs/control\\_guidelines/Equine%20Herpes%20Virus.pdf](http://www.aaep.org/pdfs/control_guidelines/Equine%20Herpes%20Virus.pdf)

## EIA Update

We have had 4 new cases of EIA (Equine Infectious Anemia) since the first of the year, they occurred Holmes, Tate and Desoto Counties. In an effort to increase the amount of testing in those areas, we will be increasing our compliance efforts in those areas.

State law requires annual testing of horses traveling within the state whether to shows, trail rides, breeding facilities, trainers, or public riding arenas.

## Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (CVI)

We continue to see issues with incomplete information on the certificates, especially with regards to physical address of shipper, as well as incomplete vaccination or testing information. As we move forward with the implementation of the Animal Disease Traceability Rule we will continue to focus on accuracy of CVI's.

Dr. Jim Watson, DVM  
State Veterinarian



# USDA's APHIS Works to Eliminate Horse Soring



An example of horse soring.

In September 2010, USDA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) found deficiencies in APHIS' horse protection program. One of OIG's recommendations was that APHIS develop and implement protocols to more consistently penalize individuals who have violated the Horse Protection Act. APHIS developed a minimum penalty protocol and, in a proposed rule published in the Federal Register on May 27, 2011, proposed requirements to ensure all horse industry organizations follow it.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has amended regulations to require horse industry organizations that license certain people to assess minimum penalties for violations of the Horse Protection Act.

The move by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), which administers the Animal Welfare Act, is meant to help eliminate the inhumane practice of horse soring— a practice primarily used in the training of Tennessee Walking Horses, racking horses and related breeds to accentuate the horse's gait. Horse soring may be accomplished by irritating or blistering a horse's forelegs through the application of chemicals or the use of mechanical devices.

Walking horses are known for possessing a naturally high gait, but in order to be successful in competition their natural gait is often exaggerated. The exaggerated gait can be achieved with proper training and considerable time; however, some horse exhibitors, owners, and trainers have chosen to use improper training methods to achieve their desired ends.



The final rule will also help ensure a level playing field for competitors at all horse shows. Previously, as some horse industry organizations have declined to issue sufficiently serious penalties to deter soring, those shows have attracted more competitors than shows where horse organizations have used APHIS' minimum penalty protocols. With this final rule, competitors now know that inspections and enforcement will take place consistently at all shows they and their horses attend.

For more information on this rule see [www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/2012/06/hpa\\_finalrule](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/2012/06/hpa_finalrule).

*Excerpt from a USDA news release—June 5, 2012*

## Recognize Potential Signs of Foreign Animal Disease!

1. Sudden, unexplained death loss in the herd or flock.
2. Severe illness affecting a high percentage of animals.
3. Blistering around an animal's mouth, nose, teats, or hooves.
4. Unusual ticks or maggots.
5. Staggering, falling or central nervous disorders.

To report, please call:

MS Board of Animal Health at 601-359-1170 or toll-free at (888) 646-8731, or  
Veterinary Services - USDA MS Area Office at 601-965-4307.

# Eastern Equine Encephalitis Reported



In the last few weeks, there have been ten reported cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis in MS horses. The following counties have reported cases: George -1, Green -1, Harrison -1, Jackson -4, and Lamar -3.

The MBAH is posting current disease information Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/msboardofanimalhealth>.

Prevention and control information, as well as a complete list of MS reportable diseases and conditions, can be found on our website [www.mbah.ms.gov](http://www.mbah.ms.gov).

Vaccinating horses for EEE and West Nile virus is highly encouraged. Although this mosquito-borne virus affects horses primarily, it can also affect humans. See the health department's website for more information on how to protect yourself from mosquito-borne illness ([www.healthymys.gov](http://www.healthymys.gov)).

# National Veterinary Stockpile Training

When animal disease outbreaks or animal health disasters occur, the United States Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Stockpile (NVS) is prepared to send supplies, equipment, and contractors to assist states when their resources to control the situation have been exceeded.



The NVS must have contractors proficient in performing unusual tasks such as poultry depopulation on a large scale.

In March, an exercise was held in Raleigh, North Carolina to train and evaluate contractors in the use of NVS approved poultry depopulation equipment. This training consisted of the setup and operation of the Kifco and North Carolina foam-producing systems. Contractors were assisted by representatives of Perdue Poultry and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture that have extensive experience deploying this type of equipment in emergency situations. Ronnie White, Emergency Coordinator with the MBAH, assisted with the evaluation of the contractors.

# Training Bolsters Animal Rescue Skills

Several Mississippi Animal Response Team members participated in trainings recently held in Baton Rouge, LA. The first week's course focused on large animal handling and technical rope rescue. The second week's course offered a first-of-a-kind awareness level instruction on animal search and rescue techniques in confined spaces, structural collapse, as well as land navigation and slack water rescue training.

The courses consisted of veterinarians, animal responders, animal control officers, and volunteers acquiring new skills to rescue animals during disaster.

IFAW, The Animal Rescue Site and GreaterGood.org donated funds to sponsor the trainings to improve animal rescue capability in the Gulf Region.

State and National groups involved in the trainings included the Louisiana State Animal Response Team, the Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine, the Louisiana State University Fire and Emergency Training Institute, the ASPCA and the Mississippi Animal Response Team.



## Scheduling Rabies Vaccination Clinics

As of May 2012, the Mississippi Board of Animal Health (MBAH) has taken over responsibility for supporting local Rabies Vaccination Clinics (RVC). These clinics have been jointly supported by the MBAH, MS State Department of Health (MBAH) and the MS Veterinary Medical Association since the early 1990's. However, coordination of the clinics has largely been out of the MBAH office with the rabies vaccination being sent from the MSDH since 2004. At this time, the MBAH is able to supply all the vaccine and equipment. What remains the same is that the MBAH will continue to work with local veterinarians to host low cost rabies vaccination clinics targeting animals that may not otherwise be vaccinated. The cost for individuals is \$5.00 per animal, with \$3.00 going to the veterinarian and \$2.00 going to the MBAH to purchase additional vaccine and supplies. If you are interested in hosting a RVC in your area, contact Dr. Brigid Elchos at [brigid@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:brigid@mdac.ms.gov).

# Inspectors Cover the State

## MBAH Inspectors Work Around the State

**The Mississippi Board of Animal Health's Inspectors attend livestock auctions each week.** The inspectors are responsible for conducting an inspection of the facilities, producing a market report at many of the auctions, and making sure animals are sold according to MBAH regulations.

Along with covering the auctions, the inspectors are responsible for several other activities. They have the duty of locating and quarantining animals that have entered the state illegally, inspecting exotic livestock pens, testing backyard poultry flocks, egg inspections, BSE sample collection, and others.

Each year the Northern district and Southern district inspectors join forces to regulate entry of animals into the State Fair and the Dixie National Rodeo. The Dixie National Rodeo is a large event that requires an inspector to be at the livestock gate around the clock during livestock events.

## MBAH Board Member Spotlight



Dr. Phil Stayer

**Dr. Phil Stayer will serve as the MBAH's chairman of the board beginning in July.**

Dr. Stayer is the Corporate Veterinarian for Sanderson Farms and has been in this position for the past 11 years.

He grew up in Pennsylvania, graduated from Pennsylvania State University and moved south to attain his DVM from the University of Tennessee. After less than a year in small animal practice, he returned to graduate school at Mississippi State University to specialize in poultry pathology, and graduated with a M.S. in chicken medicine.

After his post-DVM training and before hiring on with Sanderson Farms, he worked for a primary breeder company and then an animal health company. He has been specialty certified as a diplomate of the American College of Poultry Veterinarians since 1994. He is actively involved in various state and national poultry and veterinary organizations as well as serving as adjunct professor at Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Dr. Stayer is married to Ali Stayer. They have five children, all still at home in Hattiesburg. He is an active member of Woodland Presbyterian Church and coaches his children in recreational soccer (with help from other parents).

# MS Hosted Southern Animal Health Association

Jackson was the site of this year's annual Southern Animal Health Association (SAHA) meeting. State veterinarians, federal veterinarians, and industry from over 14 states were represented. This meeting covered topics from disease regulation to emergency management to animal traceability. Best of all, it provided the opportunity for leaders in the area of animal health to get together professionally and socially for the purpose of protecting our animal resources.



Guests were welcomed with good food and magnolias.



L to R: Dr. Cris Young (USDA VS - GA), Dr. Jack Shere (USDA VS - Eastern Region), Dr. Dee Ellis (TX), and Dr. Greg Hawkins (TX)



L to R: Amber Wilson and Dr. Dianne Stacy (LA)



Mississippi-raised catfish was enjoyed by all.

As the Hospitality State, we did our best to show the Great Southern States of SAHA the best of what Mississippi has to offer.



Mississippi Board of Animal Health  
P.O. Box 3889  
Jackson, MS 39207  
Phone—601-359-1170  
Fax—601-359-1177

Dr. Jim Watson  
State Veterinarian  
[jimw@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:jimw@mdac.ms.gov)

Dr. Brigid Elchos  
Deputy State Veterinarian  
[brigid@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:brigid@mdac.ms.gov)

The "I Care for Animals" Car Tag Fund continues to grant money to animal organizations around the state. The latest organization to receive funding was the Mississippi Animal Control and Protection Association (MACPA). They plan to host three trainings around the state concerning Mississippi Animal Cruelty Laws.



### Equine Infectious Anemia Regulation

State law requires annual testing of horses traveling within the state whether to shows, trail rides, breeding facilities, trainers, or public riding arenas. The MBAH inspectors are checking a couple of shows a month hoping to encourage horse owners to have their horses tested annually. A negative EIA test is also required at change of ownership of equine.

[www.mbah.ms.gov](http://www.mbah.ms.gov)

### Permit Needed to Move Wildlife Species Across State Lines

In Mississippi, the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and as a state endangered species. It is native to south Mississippi but may occasionally be found outside of its typical range due to people transporting it, either as pets or for food. Because of their endangered status it is illegal to possess these tortoises without a permit. These large tortoises are unique in that they are one of just a few species worldwide that dig their own burrows. They are typically dark brown or grey but young tortoises can be quite colorful with tans and browns. They have flattened front feet with large nails used for shoveling dirt. Their hind feet are stumpy and elephant-like. Although the main causes of the gopher tortoises decline involves habitat loss or lack of fire management in pine forests, a major impact is now roads. Many gopher tortoises are being lost now due to death or damage from vehicles. Mississippi is fortunate in that it has several veterinarians and wildlife rehabilitators that are trained in dealing with injuries to tortoises. If injured gopher tortoises are brought to your clinic please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at 601-965-4900 or the MS Museum of Natural Science at 601-576-6000. Under no circumstances should this, or any other wildlife species, be transported out of state without the proper permits from state and federal agencies.

Submitted by MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks



The MBAH's latest news can be found on Facebook.

[www.facebook.com/msboardofanimalhealth](http://www.facebook.com/msboardofanimalhealth)

Be sure to "Like" our page!