



# Accredited Veterinarian Newsletter

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Fall/Winter, 2007



Left to right: Peter McMahon, NYS Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets Patrick Hooker, Mike McMahon

Pete and Mike McMahon of McMahon's EZ Acres receive a certificate of recognition for being the first dairy in New York State to complete the NYSCHAP Cattle Welfare Certification Program. See accompanying story on page 2.

## A Note from the State Veterinarian

John Huntley, DVM, MPH

The New York State Accredited Veterinarian Newsletter is provided on a semiannual basis to bring you up to date on key issues affecting animal health and production. We have attempted to summarize some of the key issues impacting animal production agriculture, animal health and companion animal issues in the effort to make the newsletter more readable and useful.

Animal health programs continue to evolve to ensure that the cycle of disease detection, control, and eradication occurs at a pace consistent with disease introduction, transmission and dissemination. Nationally, the resurgence of tuberculosis in cattle populations highlights the need for continued vigilance within the veterinary and livestock communities and the need to maintain the pillars of disease control. One of those fundamental elements of disease control is animal identification and record keeping. Despite the current debate over the need for a national animal identification system, current control efforts are hampered by the lack of a national, universally adopted means of tracing animals that are exposed or infected with disease agents.

The accredited veterinarian remains the vanguard for the protection of animal health, and your contributions are extremely valuable. I look forward to working with you as we continue to improve the detection, response, and especially the prevention of costly diseases of animal and public health significance.

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## Certifying the Proper Practices

by Kathy Finnerty, NYS Cattle Health Assurance Program

The NYS Cattle Health Assurance Program (NYSCHAP) Cattle Welfare Certification Program was completed in late 2006 with an announcement in January 2007. Early in February of 2007, Pete and Mike McMahon of McMahon's EZ Acres in Homer, NY expressed interest in the program and by May the farm was certified. Soon after, the Commissioner of NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, Patrick Hooker, visited the farm to recognize McMahon's EZ Acres for being the first dairy in NY to complete the NYSCHAP Cattle Welfare Certification Program.

Although an initial visit of the farm by NYS

on a regular basis. At the onset of the certification visit the entire team met in the office to give a final review of the SOPs and culling and mortality records.

The physical assessment of the cows consisted of body condition scores, hygiene scores, and locomotion scores. A team of assessors, including Dr. Sherman and members of the development committee, walked through all barns and pens of cattle, looking at approximately 1200 animals. No problems were identified with body condition scores. The stalls of the freestall barns, as well as the lying areas for the young heifers, were extremely clean. It was clear from hygiene scoring that



*Heifers on pasture at McMahon's EZ Acres*

Department of Agriculture and Markets field veterinarian, Dr. Art Sherman, indicated no issues with the physical assessment of the farm, work was needed to complete documentation of protocols and employee training. Pete McMahon stated "When the animal welfare program was introduced to NYSCHAP, we liked the idea of being certified by Ag. & Markets. We already had the proper practices in place as well as the employee training so it was a matter of formalizing and documenting our protocols. NYSCHAP was very helpful and worked closely with us to accomplish this."

Also working closely with the McMahons was Dr. Dave Brandstadt of Midstate Veterinary Services in Cortland, NY. Dr. Brandstadt was instrumental in preparing and reviewing the standard operating procedures that were required for certification and reviewing all the culling and mortality records for the year prior to the visit. However, this was nothing new as Dr. Brandstadt and the McMahons review protocols and all farm records on a

bedding for all groups was a priority at the farm. The results from the hygiene scoring in the lactating cows using a system developed at the University of Wisconsin can be seen in the table on the next page.

Maintaining healthy hooves at McMahon's is a top priority. A hoof trimmer visits the farm four times per week to work on problem cases as well as routine trimming. A tiestall barn is used to house lame cows and those older cows that are not as competitive in the freestall. Foot baths are used three times per week for the cows in the lactating barn and twice a week for the heifers and tiestall cows. Lame cows are identified and treated as soon as possible. The excellent care provided in the stalls and lying areas is reflected in the low percentage of lameness in the herd. Using a locomotion scoring system created by Barry and Zinpro, based on research by Sprecher, it was found that only 5% of the lactating cows and 2.5% of the dry cows were a locomotion score over 1. To pass certification, no more than 15% of each animal management group can score greater than a



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There were only 3 heifers (out of about 600) that showed any sign of lameness.

It is evident from all aspects of the operation that a major effort at McMahon's EZ Acres is the health and well being of the animals. By completing the NYSCHAP Cattle Welfare Certification Program, the McMahon brothers and all their employees can prove that NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets recognizes that as well.

## Requirements for Johne's Culture Submissions

The Animal Health Diagnostic Center (AHDC) at Cornell University has become quite skilled at handling a high volume of Johne's fecal samples. However, highly subsidized test fees for NYSCHAP herds have generated a sample volume that exceeds the AHDC testing capacity. Therefore, it is important for herd veterinarians and producers to use prudence when designing herd testing strategies. In most cases, whole herd testing by the individual fecal culture method done at one point in time (or nearly one point in time) is not an acceptable use of resources.

In order to provide the best possible service to the greatest number of NYS producers, please observe the following requirements for Johne's culture submissions:

- \* Submissions that exceed 15 pools or 75 animals must be scheduled **at least one month in advance of anticipated testing**. Scheduling can be done by calling or emailing the Johne's lab.
- \* Fecal samples must be submitted in standard size fecal cups provided by the AHDC.
- \* All herds that plan to submit fecal samples, including those on a rolling herd testing schedule, must submit a Johne's testing reservation form which can be downloaded at <http://www.diaglab.vet.cornell.edu/subreq/johnes.asp>. For herds on a routine, rolling herd testing schedule, this form only has to be submitted once (unless the testing schedule or submission volume changes.) The form may be emailed or faxed to the Johne's lab. Contact information for the Johne's lab is provided below.
- \* Whole herd cultures submitted at one point in time will not be accepted unless the herd has been approved for annual whole herd cultures as part of an ongoing written herd management plan. Herds with approval for annual, whole herd culture submissions should contact the Johne's culture lab **at least 4 months in advance of anticipated testing**.

**Please be aware that if cultures are not submitted in accordance with the above requirements, owners will be charged the full fee for culture rather than the subsidized NYSCHAP fee of \$8 per individual culture.**

Contact Information for the Johne's Culture Lab, AHDC, Cornell University:

Phone: (607) 266-8965  
Fax: (607) -266-8963  
Email: [johneslab@cornell.edu](mailto:johneslab@cornell.edu)

### Hygiene Scoring at McMahon's EZ Acres

Lactating Cows	Upper Limit Allowed to Pass Certification	McMahon's EZ Acres
Lower Legs	60%	3%
Flank/Upper Legs	20%	4%
Udder	20%	4%



### Testing CWD Susceptible Species

Veterinarians that treat cervids, especially those species susceptible to CWD, are a key part of New York's CWD surveillance program. CWD susceptible species which are most commonly kept include white tailed deer, elk, red deer, sika deer and mule deer.

CWD susceptible animals which do not respond to treatment and die are required to be tested for CWD if they are 16 months or older. Any animal which shows neurologic signs and also dies should be tested for CWD, especially if it is 6 months or older. We ask for your help reinforcing with cervid owners for whom you work the need to test these animals for CWD.

Obex, retropharyngeal lymph node and tonsil samples are collected for CWD testing. Samples are usually collected by Division of Animal Industry (DAI) field veterinarians or animal health inspectors but accredited veterinarians may also collect and submit appropriate samples to the Animal Health Diagnostic Center at Cornell at owner expense. The head should be chilled, but not frozen, until sampling occurs. Testing can be coordinated by calling the DAI field veterinarian in your area or by calling the DAI office at 518-457-3502.



# A New On-line Resource for Veterinarians

Veterinarians have a new clinical resource designed to help improve disease recognition in cattle. *The Bovine Necropsy Module*, available on-line at <http://w3.vet.cornell.edu/virtualvet/>, was created by Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine with funding from New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The module includes a narrated video demonstrating a step-by-step post-mortem examination, techniques for diagnostic specimen collection, and instructions for packing and shipping diagnostic specimens to the laboratory for testing. The video includes realistic 3-D animations clarifying key steps in the procedure.

The module also includes a diagnostic database that currently holds over 1500 images of gross pathologic lesions, representing nearly 200 bovine medical conditions. The database allows users to search by disease name, lesion location, or lesion type and images can be quickly viewed and sorted in a clinician-friendly window.

The goal of *The Bovine Necropsy Module* is to improve diagnostic speed and accuracy by helping veterinarians to collect and submit high-quality specimens for diagnostic testing and by providing a way for veterinarians to work through a visual differential

The *Bovine Necropsy Module* is a free web-based resource. Anyone wishing to use the resource can register directly on the website and will receive an email with a user name and password that provides instant access to the materials.

The *Bovine Necropsy Module* is an on-going project, developed and maintained by the Partners in Animal Health program, a new educational outreach program at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. This coming year, Partners in Animal Health will continue to add hundreds of new images to the database. Feedback and suggestions from practitioners in the field are also encouraged, as the development team is looking to make improvements to the website to better meet veterinarians' needs. Feedback can be emailed directly from the website by clicking the "feedback" button on the bottom of the website or by contacting Dr. Jodi Korich at [jak10@cornell.edu](mailto:jak10@cornell.edu).

**A free DVD version of *The Bovine Necropsy Module* can be obtained by contacting :  
[David.Chico@agmkt.state.ny.us](mailto:David.Chico@agmkt.state.ny.us)**

## New Importation Requirements for Ruminants from Canada

New importation requirements for cattle from Canada took effect on 11.19.07. The guidance documents which outline the specific requirements for importing cattle under the new regulations "Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy; Minimal Risk Regions; Importation of Live Bovines and Products Derived from Bovines" can be found on the APHIS websites at: [www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/animals/live\\_animals.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/live_animals.shtml).

Information regarding importation of other ruminants can also be found on the web site. Additional information can be obtained from the APHIS National Center for Import and Export (NCIE) at 301.734.8364.

The screenshot shows the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine website interface. At the top, there are search bars for "Search Veterinary Medicine" and "Search Cornell". Below that, the navigation path is "CVM home > Virtual Vet: Bovine Necropsy > Visual Reference: Organ/Tissue". The main heading is "Reference: Lungs". On the left, there are sections for "Normals and Non-Lesions" and "Lesions". Under "Lesions", there is a search filter for "All Lungs Diseases" and a "GO" button. Below that, there is a section for "To aid in diagnosis, see other organs/tissues affected by Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia" with a list of options: "All Organs/Tissues", "External appearance", "Dyspnea", "Joints", and "Edema". The main content area shows a close-up image of a lung with a yellow arrow pointing to a consolidated area and a red arrow pointing to a thickened interlobular septum. The caption below the image reads: "Close up view of a consolidated area of a lung (yellow arrow) with typical 'marbling' appearance of the cut surface of the lung due to the thickening of interlobular septa. Contrast with edematous but still functional lung (red arrow)." At the bottom left, there are links for "Return to Review by Organ/Tissue" and "Return to Review by Disease". At the bottom right, there are links for "? Help" and "Feedback".

An example from *The Bovine Necropsy Module* course.