York found a yearling heifer showing signs of respiratory disease and a temperature of 106 F. The other 2 pen mates seemed fine. He treats the animal with his standard treatment for respiratory disease and continues to watch her. When she doesn’t seem to be improving and still has a high fever two days later the farmer decides to try a newer and stronger antibiotic to see if he can still avoid a veterinarian visit. The next day the heifer’s temperature is a little lower at 104 F but because the heifer is actually acting worse he decides to call his veterinarian. Wednesday afternoon the veterinarian visits the farm. After examining the heifer he is a bit puzzled by the crusty muzzle, bluish corneas and relatively normal sounding lungs. The heifer is in the pen alone because the farmer decided that she may be more comfortable having a pen to herself. He moved her two healthy pen mates out with a larger group of heifers. The veterinarian decides to treat the heifer with a third antibiotic and anti-inflammatories. He also is careful to observe the two pen mates to be sure they don’t seem to be affected. The heifer continues to do worse and the veterinarian continues to think more and more about Malignant Catarrahal Fever (MCF) as a possibility. He also finds out that the farm recently acquired a new young ram lamb. One of the state extension veterinarians is consulted and also is concerned about MCF. The state field veterinarian is contacted and assists with necropsy of the heifer soon after it dies on Friday morning. The diagnostic laboratory confirms Ovine-Associated MCF. The severe routine case of respiratory disease has turned into an unexpected “zebra” – MCF.

The point of these 2 cases is that we have to always be watching for those “zebras” and report anything suspicious to the Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM).

MCF is a sporadic viral disease that is carried by mainly younger sheep and wildebeest which causes significant disease and death in cattle, buffalo, deer and reindeer. It is characterized by damage to epidermal tissues causing ulcers and necrosis. Usually it only affects 1 cow in a herd but it has been associated with as many as 12 cases. Infected cattle do not shed the virus and are not a threat to other animals. In the US, is almost always associated with the presence of sheep, but the appearance of signs typical of MCF in cattle, bison or deer in close proximity to exotic hoofstock should always put MCF on the differential list. The ovine MCF virus (OvHV-2) differs from the wildebeest form (A1HV-1) in that wildebeest carriers primarily shed virus during parturition, while sheep carrying MCF shed virus sporadically irrespective of season.

Suggested methods to prevent MCF losses include:

- Keep sheep and cattle at least 100 feet away from each other and ideally not in the same facility.
- Fomites can spread MCF: Don’t share tools between MCF reservoir species and MCF susceptible species.
- Don’t share wash racks or show rings with sheep and cattle. If it is necessary to do this have cattle use the facility first followed by the sheep.
- If this cannot be done remove bedding from the area, clean and use a virucidal disinfectant.

CASE #1
On a Wednesday afternoon in May, a state field vet in Western NY received a call from a private vet regarding a wildlife park. The park had 5 young bison, 3 young Zebu cattle, and a Watusi die in rapid succession. There were also 3 sick young Zebu animals with clinical signs of respiratory distress, fever, bilateral nasal discharge and bilateral ocular edema which were put on supportive care. No vesicles were found on any of the sick animals. The top differential diagnoses were MCF, BVD and IBR. History showed that these young animals were exposed to wildebeest that are in the park – a newly purchased wildebeest calved in February which had close contact to most of the young stock in the park. Samples were submitted to the AHDC at Cornell. The owner agreed to sacrifice the sick Zebu for necropsy and also is concerned about MCF which is the same disease. The owner also is consultants about MCF and agrees to sacrifice the sick Zebu for necropsy and also is concerned about MCF. The owner also is consultants about MCF and agrees to sacrifice the sick Zebu for necropsy and also is concerned about MCF. The point of these 2 cases is that we have to always be watching for those “zebras” and report anything suspicious to the Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM).

CASE #2
On a Sunday evening a farmer in Eastern New York found a yearling heifer showing signs of respiratory disease and a temperature of 106 F. The other 2 pen mates seemed fine. He treats the animal with his standard treatment for respiratory disease and continues to watch her. When she doesn’t seem to be improving and still has a high fever two days later the farmer decides to try a newer and stronger antibiotic to see if he can still avoid a veterinarian visit. The next day the heifer’s temperature is a little lower at 104 F but because the heifer is actually acting worse he decides to call his veterinarian. Wednesday afternoon the veterinarian visits the farm. After examining the heifer he is a bit puzzled by the crusty muzzle, bluish corneas and relatively normal sounding lungs. The heifer is in the pen alone because the farmer decided that she may be more comfortable having a pen to herself. He moved her two healthy pen mates out with a larger group of heifers. The veterinarian decides to treat the heifer with a third antibiotic and anti-inflammatories. He also is careful to observe the two pen mates to be sure they don’t seem to be affected. The heifer continues to do worse and the veterinarian continues to think more and more about Malignant Catarrahal Fever (MCF) as a possibility. He also finds out that the farm recently acquired a new young ram lamb. One of the state extension veterinarians is consulted and also is concerned about MCF. The state field veterinarian is contacted and assists with necropsy of the heifer soon after it dies on Friday morning. The diagnostic laboratory confirms Ovine-Associated MCF. The severe routine case of respiratory disease has turned into an unexpected “zebra” – MCF.

The point of these 2 cases is that we have to always be watching for those “zebras” and report anything suspicious to the Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM).
Equine Arboviral Update—Review of 2008

West Nile Virus

In 2008, we had three confirmed equine case of West Nile (WN) virus in New York. The first case onset was July 6, 2008 and the last onset date was September 6th. One of these three horses was also confirmed to have a dual infection with EEE virus as well as West Nile. This horse died, while the others recovered. The cases resided in Clinton, Onondaga and Suffolk Counties.

West Nile virus is a virus that can be carried and transmitted by mosquitoes. To protect people, other animals and horses it is important to reduce mosquito habitat and breeding grounds, by eliminating sources of standing water. Since many mosquitoes are particularly active at dawn and dusk it is important to minimize your risk of being bitten during those times. Mosquito repellant used as directed can also help reduce mosquito bites. Vaccines for both EEE and West Nile are available for horses.

Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis Virus

In 2008 New York reported four confirmed cases of eastern equine encephalomyelitis (EEE) in horses. The first horse became ill on September 1 and the last case onset was reported to be on September 28. All horses presented with neurologic signs. All died or were euthanized. One of these horses was also found to have a co-infection with West Nile virus. Counties with positive horses include: Clinton (2) and Oswego (2).

EEE virus is among the most serious of a group of mosquito-borne virus diseases. Occurring in the eastern half of the US, it is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito and can infect humans as well as horses and other animals, but infected horses and people cannot spread the disease. An excellent vaccine is available for horses. Control efforts directed to the mosquito vector are the same as recommended for West Nile virus.

Emergency Programs

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets has been actively working on developing county animal response teams (CARTs) as part of the Empire State Animal Response Team Program. Modeled after a successful similar program developed in North Carolina, CARTS bring together committed volunteers willing to assist animals during emergencies and disasters. These teams serve at the direction of county emergency management and provide an excellent way for state and county governments to comply with the New York State and Federal Pet Evacuation, Sheltering, and Transportation Acts (P.E.T.S. Act) which were passed after Hurricane Katrina.

CART Volunteers are asked to take basic online training classes which provide an overview of the Incident Command System, the CART program, and the National Incident Management System. Once the required trainings are completed, volunteers are considered qualified and allowed to participate on a CART. Once qualified, individuals are considered volunteer state employees during activations and are covered for worker’s compensation and liability. The coverage was provided by legislation passed in New York State in 2008. More information on the ESART/CART program can be found at www.empireSART.com.

The department is also developing a Veterinary Emergency Corps. This volunteer corps will be comprised of veterinarians and veterinary technicians that will augment state and federal veterinarians with regulatory activities during a significant animal disease outbreak or other overwhelming event. Individuals participating in this corps will be asked to complete training similar to that required for CART volunteers and all training will be available online. Participants in the Veterinary Emergency Corps will be paid volunteers and will operate as temporary state employees while participating. More information about this important program will be forthcoming.

Cervid Identification Tags

We now have eartags available which replace the silver A&M / small ruminant tags which were formerly used for scrapie identification of sheep and goats and also for cervid (deer and elk) and swine ID. They are the smaller A&M (swine) size silver metal tag but are coded 21EA with 4 numeric digits. These will be used for swine and cervids but not for sheep and goats which require scrapie ID. These new “E” tags are available to veterinarians and individual cervid owners from DAI at 518-485-0839 (fax) or 518-457-1709 (phone). Tags issued to deer / elk owners are for use on their premises only and not for giving to a neighbor or friend for use on another farm. Records of tag use in cervids must be kept for at least 6 years (72 months) after their use. They may be used as either the primary or secondary unique, official form of ID for cervids.

Please discontinue using silver scrapie coded metal tags (i.e. NYCN1234 and A&M12345) tags in sheep and goats. Official scrapie tags may be obtained by calling Anna Draisey, the USDA-APHIS-VS scrapie ID coordinator, at 518-858-1424. Records of scrapie tag usage must be maintained for at least 5 years after tag application.
Reminders about EIA Test Record Forms

The Division of Animal Industry has now switched over to the Federal EIA Test Record, Form VS10-11. This form has differences when compared to the former NYS EIA Test Record, Form AI-619A. Please remember that all fields on this federal form must be filled out except for:

Blocks 13-15 (Certification of Owner or Agent) and Block 4 (GIS Information). The EIA testing laboratories have been notified that these EIA test forms must be completed as aforementioned or else they may reject the paperwork and/or sample. Please follow these instructions. Further, this form now has an additional copy attached to it. Please press firmly when completing this test record. Lastly, the top copy of the test record is the testing veterinarian’s copy. This means that this top copy is the original. It is the responsibility of the veterinarian to keep this copy in case an owner needs a certified copy of the EIA test record.

Swine Influenza H1N1 Update

H1N1 Influenza

There are many resources available to provide information about the novel strain of H1N1 influenza currently associated with illness in humans. A good source of information about H1N1 influenza, avian influenza, and pandemic influenza is www.PandemicFlu.gov maintained by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The www.PandemicFlu.gov website provides information on the following topics:

General H1N1 Information

Spread of H1N1 Flu
Flu Virus and Food
Flu Virus and Animals
Preventing the Flu
Coping with the Flu
Flu and the Workplace

Information about the novel strain of H1N1 as it relates to agriculture can be found on the USDA website at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/h1n1/.

It is important to note that there is no evidence at this time that swine in the U.S. are infected with this virus strain and pork and pork products continue to be safe to consume.

From the office of the Federal IMPORT/EXPORT clerk....

As many of you may know, USDA-APHIS-VS (Veterinary Services) has long had a toll-free, 800 number that provides automated information about state import regulations and disease status. Over the years however this number, (800-545-8732), has become difficult to maintain and many accredited veterinarians now prefer to pull this information directly from our website. For these reasons, VS is cancelling the number and as of June 30th, it will no longer be in service.

Before making this decision, VS reached out to its state partners to get feedback about the 800 number and its current usefulness. Many state vets reported that the information for their state was no longer current and that the phone line had outlived its usefulness. In addition, a number of state vets asked that accredited veterinarians contact their offices directly for this information.

We do recognize that some accredited veterinarians still use this number, which is why we wanted to provide advance notice of the change. The APHIS website: www.aphis.usda.gov contains information about state import requirements and also provides contact information for every state veterinarian in the country. On the home page, choose “Import and Export” in the blue box on the left. Then in the “I want to...” box, on the right side of the page, choose “View a state’s import requirements” which will bring you to a page where you can choose the applicable state. This site is updated regularly and we encourage you to bookmark this page on your computer.

We apologize for any inconvenience this decision may cause, but believe that this change will enable VS to do a better job of providing accurate and reliable information to accredited veterinarians across the country.

For more information, please call the USDA-APHIS-VS office in Albany, NY at 518-218-7540.
>Here is a useful link for veterinarians. The FDA’s Center for Veterinary Medicine has a resource for veterinarians which lists FDA approved animal drug products. This resource is known as the Green Book. It is found online at the following address: So when in doubt, visit www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/animaldrugsatfda.

>The Division of Animal Industry has a new webpage pertaining to Sheep and Goats. It is at: http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AI/sheep_and_goats.html. This page has a lot of good information for producers and veterinarians who are involved in the sheep and goat industries. Please check it out.

>CEM Update: New York currently has 13 mares and 1 stallion who have been exposed to CEM (Contagious Equine Metritis). Of these 13 animals, the stallion and 9 mares have tested negative for CEM and are no longer under quarantine. The remaining 4 mares will be tested once they have foaled. Thanks to all the private vets who are helping with the testing and treatment of these exposed horses.

>Rabies vaccination by a Licensed Veterinary Technician (LVT) is allowed only under direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian. Direct supervision has been interpreted to mean that the licensed veterinarian is on the premises with the LVT at the time of vaccination. This also applies if an LVT is assisting with accredited work such as EIA testing.

>As always, please remember to update your contact information if it has changed. It is the only means we have to contact you in the event of an emergency. Contact Pam Hull at 518-457-3502 or Barbara Miller at 518-218-7540 at the Albany federal office as well.

>We have seen a chronic problem occurring in the official paperwork, test records, etc that are coming into our office. Veterinarians are not filling out forms completely and legibly. This creates potential problems for the animal owners that are paying you for this service. Consequences of not filling out the paperwork legibly, completely and correctly include: rejection of health certificates or official testing, delay in authorizing the paperwork or test as official, inability to transport animals across state or country lines, etc. Please fill out all forms as completely as possible, especially addresses. Record where the animals are housed, not where the mailing address is. Be sure to include a phone number where we can reliably reach you and the animal owner in the event that there is a problem. If we notice a chronic pattern of errors from a particular veterinarian, we will be notifying you of this problem. Please help out your clients, your office and our office by taking a little extra time to be sure the paperwork and test records are complete.

Scrapie Update

USDA Will Pay to Test Mature Sheep Found Dead on the Farm for Scrapie

Producers can contact USDA when they find mature (14 months old +) sheep that have died on their property (including death from injuries, unknown reasons, euthanasia). USDA will visit the farm, harvest necessary tissues to test for scrapie and pay the owner $10 per sheep tested (up to 3 sheep). Please share this information with your clients and have them contact USDA for more information (518-218-7540).

Sheep and Goat Identification Requirements (County, State Fairs and Private Shows)

Sheep and goats to be exhibited must be wearing USDA approved identification. Please have your client contact USDA-APHIS-VS to receive ear tags prior to your visit out to their farm. Please remember that the entire scrapie ID must be recorded on the CVI. Example: NYKDM/B1A0 or NY75003/1333.

For tags, please call Anna Drasey @ 518-858-1424 or 518-218-7540.