

Veterinarians and Reportable Diseases

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Daily veterinarians play a key role in animal disease surveillance. With each appointment and farm call, veterinarians deal with the challenge to diagnose and treat a disease or condition affecting the health and well-being of an animal or group of animals along with dealing with their owner's emotional and/or financial well-being. No matter what the species – large or small, disease is the common threat to all. A “new” or foreign disease can devastate the individual, kennel, herd or population. We are fortunate in Connecticut to be free of a number of economically important and public health significant animal diseases i.e. Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, Avian Influenza and others, that burden other states and countries. The control and eradication of these diseases was not easy or inexpensive. It required cooperation by all parties, funds, diligence and time to be successful. Active and passive surveillance for disease involves owners, veterinarians, state and federal animal health officials and diagnostic laboratories. Surveillance ensures freedom from eradicated diseases and early detection of new emerging diseases and the resurgence of endemic diseases.

In the Connecticut General Statutes Section 22-26f(e), the State Veterinarian has the authority to issue a list of reportable animal and avian diseases and reportable laboratory findings to veterinarians licensed in the state and to diagnostic laboratories that conduct tests on Connecticut animals and birds. The current list is a composite of state, federal and OIE reportable disease lists. Many of the diseases listed are foreign or exotic to the US; others are not. The US is a member of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and required by OIE and trading partners to report outbreaks and the presence of each disease listed. For more information on the US status for each reportable disease go to www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/disease_status.htm

The attending veterinarian is responsible for notifying the State Veterinarian and providing information about the clinical case in a timely matter. Depending on the circumstances, the State Veterinarian may contact the federal Assistant District Director (AD) for New England to assign a federal Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician (FADD) to investigate and collect samples.

Veterinarians should contact the State Veterinarian immediately at 860-713-2505 to report any instances of high morbidity, mortality or vesicular-type diseases and any recognition or suspicion of a vesicular-type disease or zoonotic diseases i.e. Anthrax, Botulism, Brucellosis, Plague, Q Fever, Tularemia, Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis and Viral Hemorrhagic Fever, which are possible indicators of bioterrorism.

Suspicious disease conditions that veterinarians should also report to the State Veterinarian or AD (508-363-2290) quickly are: mucosal diseases, hemorrhagic septicemia, “abortion storms” of unknown etiology, central nervous system or undiagnosed encephalitic conditions, unusual numbers of acute deaths, severe respiratory conditions, pox or lumpy skin conditions, and unusual myiasis or acarasis (exotic flies, mites, ticks, etc.)