

# MBAH News & Views

Mississippi Board of Animal Health

Dr. Jim Watson, DVM  
State Veterinarian

Dr. Brigid Elchos, DVM  
Deputy State Veterinarian

S U M M E R 2 0 1 5



## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Reportable Public Health Diseases
- Rabies Vaccination Clinics
- Trich Certification

## State Veterinarian Update

The MBAH is actively monitoring the current Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak, which is the largest foreign animal disease response in US history.

Detection of HPAI in wild birds, backyard poultry or commercial poultry in 20 states has led to the depopulation of 33 million chickens and seven million turkeys to date. State personnel, 300 USDA employees, and 1300 contractors are responding to the outbreak. It is estimated the cost will be approximately \$500 million.

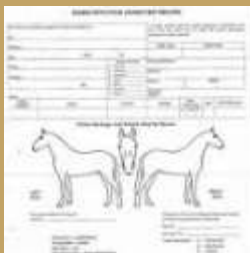


There is significant concern that later this year or next winter additional states along the Mississippi Flyway will be exposed to the disease. Therefore, surveillance is an important part of our preparedness activities as a state. The MBAH maintains a Disease Reporting Hotline (1-888-722-3106) for people to report sick or dying poultry, and our office will coordinate getting testing performed. We are also reviewing our response plans with regards to needed resources as well as working with the poultry industry to increase biosecurity activities.

HPAI is only one of the many diseases that are being addressed. After 12 months with no positive EIA cases, nine EIA cases (4 owners) were reported in 90 days. While most of these were horses on farms where there was no movement history, one case in particular is disconcerting because of a link to a horse trainer nine months previous to the finding of the infection. Interestingly, two of the cases were a result of Facebook sales. Please help us get the message out to horse owners that the disease is still a threat, and that state law requires that all horses moving on public roads, at facilities that comingle horses, or horses being sold must have a current negative EIA Test.

Lastly, we are pleased to welcome our newest MBAH employee, Alicia McCraw. She is our receptionist and we hope you will not hesitate to give us a call if we can be of assistance.

Dr. Jim Watson, DVM  
State Veterinarian



# Reportable Public Health Diseases



## Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

The map to the left shows the number of cases of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever in dogs sent to the MS Veterinary Research and Diagnostic Laboratory. There were 48 cases from 18 counties identified (from July 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014). RMSF is transmitted by ticks (the common American dog tick or the lone-star tick) to humans and dogs in all contiguous US states except Maine. In humans, RMSF can be fatal if left untreated. Mississippi reports about 20 cases of RMSF in humans each year. **All cases of RMSF in animals are reportable to the MBAH primarily because of its public health ramifications.** Although the cases were reported primarily from central and south MS, RMSF can occur in any location in the state. Several years ago, a fatal case of RMSF was reported in a human and her dogs from the Delta. For more information on RMSF in humans see the MSDH website at [www.healthymss.com](http://www.healthymss.com).

## Rabies

In 2014, one bat from Rankin County tested positive for rabies. Unfortunately, the puppy that had contact with the bat had not had its full set of rabies vaccinations. The owner opted for a six month quarantine over euthanasia. This example serves as a great reminder of why rabies vaccine is required by law in MS. Vaccinated animals that come in contact with a suspected rabid animal can be boosted and simply monitored at home for 45 days. Unvaccinated animals that come in contact with suspected rabid animals are recommended to be euthanized immediately, or they will have to go through a strict isolation period of 6 months. So, vaccination can save the life of a beloved pet, prevent unnecessary expenditure of time, money and personnel resources, and prevent exposure of the family to a potential case of rabies.

Late last year, a cat from Bogalusa, LA tested positive for rabies by the MSDH public health laboratory. Fortunately, the cat turned out to have bat-variant rabies. This case caused a good deal of concern for public health, wildlife, and animal health officials until the variant of rabies was identified. Efforts regarding educational campaigns and mass rabies vaccination clinics were discussed. Although, we were fortunate not to have a terrestrial wildlife variant found in a domestic animal in MS this time it is important to remain vigilant for cases and vaccinate our domestic pets to maintain a barrier between wildlife rabies and humans.

Veterinarians and shelters are teaming up to do their part. There were six mass rabies vaccination clinics held in MS in 2014. Many thanks go out to the vet-shelter partnerships that made it happen in Pearl River, Lee, Washington, Lowndes and Lincoln Counties!

Vaccinate domestic pets to protect them and to maintain a barrier between wildlife rabies and humans.

# Reportable Public Health Diseases

## Equine EEE/WNV

Two cases of WNV (one from Hinds; one from Pontotoc) and one case of EEE from Webster County were reported in 2014. That was the lowest number of cases reported in several years. One of the highest reporting years was 2012 when there were 39 cases of WNV and 32 cases of EEE.

These mosquito-borne viruses affect both humans and horses and are known to occur in a cyclic manner where there is a sharp increase in cases in both humans and horses followed by a steady decrease for several years until it peaks again. So, please remember to vaccinate horses annually to prevent the effects of these devastating diseases.



## Pearl River County – a model rabies vaccination program

For over 15 years the MBAH has partnered with local veterinarians and shelters to provide low cost rabies vaccination clinics in areas at high risk for rabies introduction. The Pearl River County SPCA has been extremely successful using this program to not only to provide rabies vaccination but also to establish a wellness program for animals attending the clinics. These clinics have been so successful that pet owners may line up two hours before the clinic opens!



The veterinarians and staff working the clinics have been very accommodating and will often go to the car/truck to give the vaccinations. In 2014, they did 541 rabies vaccinations, 152 microchips, 78 cat wellness shots, and 465 dog wellness shots. What an accomplishment!

The MS Department of Health in Pearl River County partners with the SPCA locally to complete all the paperwork and issue the tags. This partnership has been a great value to the SPCA and the local community.

We are proud of their efforts to make Pearl River County a leader in animal health and welfare programs. They have offered to help other counties set up similar clinics, please contact Carla Gerrard with the Pearl River County SPCA for more information.



Mississippi Board of Animal Health  
121 N. Jefferson St.  
P.O. Box 3889  
Jackson, MS 39207  
Phone—601-359-1170  
Fax—601-359-1177  
www.mbah.ms.gov

Dr. Jim Watson  
State Veterinarian  
jimw@mdac.ms.gov

Dr. Brigid Elchos  
Deputy State Veterinarian  
brigid@mdac.ms.gov

Newsletter Editor—Beth Adcock



**Congratulations to the MBAH's Poultry Director, Betty Roberts,** (center) for being honored at the Pearl River Classic in Columbia. Their highest award is now named the Betty Roberts award.

Join the Mississippi Animal Response Team!



**MART is the state's official coordination and response team** for disasters involving animals and agriculture. Contact [beth@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:beth@mdac.ms.gov) for more information on MART.

## Trichomoniasis Certification

Due to past problems with quality control of submitted samples, a MS trichomoniasis certification program has been established for MS veterinarians interested in submitting samples for testing.

Call the MBAH at 601-359-1170 to request a DVD which will provide you with the tool to get your certification.

As many of you already know, pooling of samples for PCR has been validated, and so we will allow pooling as an approved method as long as the protocol established by the diagnostic laboratory is followed.

In order to prevent overgrowth of organisms, it is very important to follow the proper protocol and shipping times for valid test results. States are continuing to work together to standardize state entry requirements; however, it is important to call the state of destination to verify their entry requirements.

Look for MBAH information at  
[www.facebook.com/msboardofanimalhealth](https://www.facebook.com/msboardofanimalhealth) or [www.mbah.ms.gov](http://www.mbah.ms.gov).