USAHA/AAVLD ANNUAL MEETING

The United States Animal Health Association’s (USAHA) 108th Annual Meeting and the American Association of Veterinary laboratory Diagnostician’s (AAVLD) 47th Annual Conference will be October 21-27, 2004, at the Sheraton Greensboro Hotel, Greensboro, North Carolina.

The 2004 annual meeting will feature scientific sessions on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE), toxicology, molecular diagnostics, avian diagnostics, fecal detection methods for M. paratuberculosis, virology, pathology, bacteriology and epidemiology; meetings of USAHA’s 32 species- and subject-oriented committees, and over 25 AAVLD committees and subcommittees.

During the USAHA/AAVLD General Session on October 24th, several important United States government leaders in animal and public health will speak to the challenges facing the animal health community in safeguarding animal and public health.

This year, surveillance is the theme of the October 25th USAHA/AAVLD Plenary Scientific Session. Featured speakers to address issues on surveillance for animal diseases.

Dr. Alex Thiermann, President of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), will present the keynote address. Dr. Thiermann will provide a global perspective on the importance of surveillance for animal diseases, especially for setting standards for fair trade. He will also discuss current OIE activities and initiatives relative to that subject, including bovine spongiform (Continued on page 10)

AAVLD Plenary Program: Focus on BSE

The AAVLD program for 2004 will feature a substantial number of presentations devoted to the continuing very important topic of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE), with current emphasis on BSE. This includes 11 papers and one poster on the TSE’s. The AAVLD Plenary Session on Saturday, October 23 will feature four in-depth presentations to enhance and update the understanding of this relatively new and perplexing disease.

Dr. Don Knowles, USDA (Continued on page 10)
This is a short interval since our last newsletter, but nonetheless busy, as we speed towards the final planning for the annual meeting in Greensboro, North Carolina. Enhanced bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) surveillance by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS), continues to be a major player as we waited through the first two “inconclusive” results that were negative. At this time, we are studying the advanced notice of proposed rules by USDA, APHIS, Food Safety Inspection Services (FSIS) and Health and Human Services (HHS), Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued on July 9th that would remove all specified risk material (SRM’s) from all animal feed, including pet food; require dedicated equipment or facilities for handling, storing feed and ingredients during manufacturing and transportation to prevent cross contamination; prohibit use of all mammalian and poultry protein in ruminant feed to prevent cross contamination; and prohibit materials from non-ambulatory disabled cattle and dead stock from use in all animal feed. Comments on these rules are due by August 13th.

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) has been active with its members through the Animal Agriculture Coalition (AAC) concerning both the House of Representatives (HR 857) and Senate (S2352) bills titled the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act. We have also been concerned with the AAC on Representative Ackerman’s desire to add his Downer Cow Amendment to the House Agriculture Appropriations Bill for FY 2005. We have continued with the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD), AAC, American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), and the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) to support increased funding for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN).

The Executive Committee continues to be extremely active with weekly chores. Most notably was a meeting set up by Bret Marsh, Chair, Committee on Government Relations to meet with Ron DeHaven, Administrator, USDA-APHIS. The Executive Committee also met with Peter Fernandez, Associate Administrator of APHIS, and John Clifford, Deputy Administrator of Veterinary Services (VS). Several issues concerning BSE, avian influenza, tuberculosis, brucellosis, U.S. Animal Identification Program, communications, and the Annual Meeting were discussed. The Executive Committee wants to thank each of these individuals for their time to meet with us and their dedication in safeguarding animal health and public health and food safety. David Thain, President of the National Assembly, joined us for this important meeting. This meeting also gave the full Executive Committee time to discuss several important issues and provide input on the final plans for the Annual Meeting. Rick Willer along with Gary Osweiller from AAVLD have done an excellent job in organizing a great scientific program.

I have appointed Kevin Custer with American Protein Inc. Chair of the Committee on Feed Safety. I want to thank Tom McGinn for the excellent job he did as the prior Chair of this Committee. Richard Sellers, American Feed Industry Association, will remain as Vice Chair.

I want to recognize the recent announcement by Secretary Veneman of the appointments of Edward B. Knipling as Administrator, Agriculture Research Services (ARS) and Antoinette H. Betschart and Carid E. Rexroad, Jr. as Associate Administrators. Martin Mendoza was appointed as Associate Deputy Administrator for USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services (WS). Congratulations to all of these recent appointees and USAHA looks forward to working with them.

In closing, it is imperative that USAHA’s committees work on their agendas and programs for Greensboro. USAHA’s office in Richmond, Rick Willer, Program Chair, the Executive Committee and I are available to help you with your meeting plans. To all USAHA members, try to bring a new person or organization to the Greensboro meeting. It is extremely important to have our colleagues at the table as we discuss issues concerning the safeguarding of animal health, public health and food safety. Have a great summer!!
The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) held its 72nd meeting (80th anniversary) in Paris, France, May 23-28, 2004. Delegates representing 139 member countries were in attendance. Three new countries became members since the last meeting (May 2003), bringing the total number of member countries to 167. Of note is that 120 of them are considered as developing. In attendance were Drs. Peter Fernandez (the official delegate); John Clifford; Michael David; Larry Granger; Willie Reed, AAVLD President; Lyle Vogel, AVMA; and Rick Willer, USAHA’s President-Elect.

Dr. Abdoulaye Niang from Senegal, current President of the International Committee (IC) or body of the official delegates, presided over the meeting assisted by Director General Dr. Bernard Vallat (Dr. Vallat presented the keynote address at the 2003 USAHA Annual Meeting). It is interesting to note that typically 30 percent of the delegates are attending for the first time.

Highlights of the week-long meeting included two special technical presentations – Emerging and Re-Emerging Zoonotic Diseases, presented by Dr. Lonnie King and Animal Identification and Traceability, presented by Dr. Luis Barcos from Argentina, separate meetings of the five OIE “Regions” including the Region of the Americas presided over by its President Peter Fernandez, and reports and discussions of all of the activities of the OIE Specialist Commissions – Terrestrial Animal Health Standards, Aquatic Animal Health Standards, Scientific Standards, and Biological Standards, and the permanent Working Groups – Wildlife Diseases, overseen by the Scientific Commission, and Animal Production Food Safety and Animal Welfare, overseen by the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission.

Dr. Alex Thiermann, President of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, skillfully guided the IC through discussion of the 28 new or revised Terrestrial Code Chapters. His Commission is comprised of six elected representatives from the United States, Germany, New Zealand, Russia, Zimbabwe and Sudan.

Six Terrestrial Code Chapters were adopted by the IC with only minor changes to the proposed wording – bovine brucellosis, Rinderpest, Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia, Evaluation of Veterinary Services, equine influenza, and rabies. The texts in the Code Chapters on Leptospirosis and Paratuberculosis were deleted but the diseases will remain listed and new recommendations will be worked on. The disease/pathogenic agent listing and notification criteria recommended by an Ad Hoc group formed in 2003 to address this issue were approved. This brought the OIE disease listing system in line with WTO SPS terminology on “specific hazards.” This was one of the most notable Terrestrial Code changes approved by the IC this year. With this Code change, there are no longer two separate disease lists, rather a single list combining the previous List A and B diseases. The new notification scheme for listed diseases (immediate vs. regular or periodic) commences on January 1, 2005. The IC will vote on changes to the disease list during the May 2005 Annual Meeting.

The Terrestrial Code Chapters on Avian Influenza (AI) and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) proposed for revision/adoption evoked the most discussion. An Ad Hoc group made recommendations on a three-tier category scheme (negligible risk, controlled risk, and undetermined risk) based on the outcome of a risk assessment and supported by a strong surveillance system (described in a Code Appendix for BSE).

Other actions relative to BSE include adoption of a new BSE...
Registration forms and program information for the 2004 USAHA/AAVLD Annual Meeting, October 21-27, 2004 are included in this Newsletter.

Meeting Registration:
Be sure to complete and return the annual meeting registration form to the USAHA Richmond office by October 4, 2004. Be sure to include your registration fee payment with your credit card information or your check made payable to USAHA. Anyone sending a check from outside the United States, please make your check payable in U.S. dollars on an American Bank. You may register online by going to www.usaha.org and click Annual Meeting.

Refunds:
The refund policy for those who pre-register but are unable to attend the meeting is to withhold $25 to cover processing and handling. Your request for a refund must be made in writing within seven (7) days after the end of the meeting. If the request for refund is not received prior to the meeting an additional $30 will be deducted for the cost of the President’s Dinner, because of the guaranteed dinner count.

Agenda:
A tentative meeting agenda is enclosed. Please be sure to review the agenda, because several changes have been made in meeting times since last year. Updated agendas can be found by going to www.usaha.org and click Annual Meeting or www.aavld.org and click Annual Meeting.

Prayer Service:
The third annual prayer service will be Sunday, October 24, from 6:30AM to 8AM.

Tours:
See enclosure about two tours. One on Monday, October 25 to Replacements, Ltd. They have the world’s largest selection of old and new china, crystal, silver and collectibles.
The second tour on Tuesday, October 26, is to Old Salem. Here you can find yourself in another time and place. Here, you can experience how life in this unique early American community was shaped and altered by 200 years of American history.

Please be sure to pre-register for the tours by completing the enclosed registration form and forward to the Richmond USAHA office by October 1, 2004.

We look forward to seeing you in Greensboro!!

Prayer Breakfast
As our nation continues the difficult fight against terrorism in the cause of freedom, we should be grateful for our country; and take time to thank God for the many blessings He has given this land throughout our history; and pray for the protection of our country, our leaders and our families. Also, we should ask God for direction in decision making in research and animal health issues. God’s Word teaches, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). At the USAHA/AAVLD Annual Conference, we will be having a prayer breakfast on Sunday, October 24, 2004. Please consider attending this event. If you have any questions, you may call Dr. David Hertha at 256-828-9134, or email him at Dhertha@aol.com.
**Marshall Named Veterinarian of the Year**

**June 30, 2004**

State Veterinarian Dr. David Marshall recently was named Veterinarian of the Year by the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association (NCVMA).

The NCVMA honored Marshall for his commitment to the veterinary profession and his contributions to a position that is responsible for preventing and diagnosing animal diseases, administering animal health programs, and inspecting meat and poultry processing facilities.

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**Dr. Lee Myers Receives Award**

Dr. Lee Myers, Georgia State Veterinarian and USAHA’s Second Vice-President received the American Veterinary Medical Association’s (AVMA) Public Service Award in recognition of outstanding contributions to public health and regulatory veterinary medicine. Dr. Myers received this award during the 141st AVMA Annual Convention, Philadelphia, Penn., July 25, 2004.

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**Dr. Ron DeHaven Honored**

Dr. Ron DeHaven, Administrator USDA, APHIS received the American Veterinary Medical Associations Meritorious Service Award in recognition of contributions to the advancement of veterinary medicine and for having brought honor and distinction to the profession through personal and professional activities conducted outside the areas of organized veterinary medicine and research. Dr. DeHaven received this award during the 141st AVMA Annual Convention, Philadelphia, Penn., July 25, 2005.

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**State Veterinarian Resigns**

Dr. Paul Norris, State Veterinarian of Arkansas, recently resigned and Dr. Hashim Ghori has been appointed acting State Veterinarian of Arkansas.

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**Barbara Martin Selected As New USDA/APHIS Network Coordinator**

Barbara Martin of NVSL has been selected National Animal Health Laboratory Network Coordinator. She begins her new duties August 9, 2004.

Barb received her BS in Microbiology and MS in Veterinary Microbiology from Iowa State University. She has worked at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories for more than 20 years. As the Team Leader for the Brucella and Mycobacterium Reagents Team of the Diagnostic Bacteriology Laboratory, she was responsible for the production, standardization, and distribution of the reagents used in the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Programs. She was also responsible for proficiency testing those involved in conducting serologic assays for the Brucellosis Eradication Program and the Johne’s Program. In January 2003, she was detailed to validate rapid diagnostics to detect foreign animal diseases. Since that time she has been coordinating ARS and APHIS efforts to validate real time PCRs for CSFV, FMDV and VSV. In this role she worked domestically and internationally with veterinary diagnosticians to ensure that the assays developed are properly validated and meet international standards.

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**CONTACT INFO**

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Articles and feedback may be submitted via email to: linda@usaha.org
Brucellosis Hits Wyoming Herd

Two cows from a Campbell county, Wyoming, herd have tested positive for brucellosis. The disease was found in two 11-year-old cattle from a Campbell county herd of 80 head that were part of a consignment sent to a Pierre, South Dakota livestock market on June 23. The positive test results on the two cattle were confirmed at the South Dakota State Veterinary Laboratory and at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa.

The herd of origin of the infected cattle was immediately quarantined along with six other contact herds. This is the fourth herd of cattle to be found affected with brucellosis in Wyoming. The disease was found in herds in Sublette and Washakie counties late last year and early this year, causing Wyoming to lose its brucellosis-free status.

Canada Intends to Ban SRMs in Animal Feed

Canada Announces Intent to ban SRMs in all Animal Feed: I na separate but concurrent announcement, the Canadian government said it also intended to propose a ban on the use of SRMs, as well as dead and non-ambulatory, disabled cattle in all animal feed. The Canadian announcement did not specifically define SRMs, but said that its government intended to “consult widely on the scope, implementation timetable and other operational details” of such a ban “as it is further developed.”

Report Suspicious Animal Sickness to USDA

The Department of Agriculture is asking veterinarians and producers to report cattle thought to be at risk for bovine spongiform encephalopathy by calling a toll-free number operated by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The number is (866) 536-7593.

Callers reporting high-risk cattle will connect with a local APHIS office that will provide additional information. The USDA will help defray costs incurred by industries participating in the surveillance program for such items as transportation, disposal, storage, and testing of carcasses.

As part of APHIS’ enhanced BSE surveillance effort, producers, renderers, veterinarians, and others should call the toll-free number and report high-risk cattle if they see animals that are dead, nonambulatory, or have signs of central nervous system disorder, emaciation, or other signs associated with BSE.

To target diseases such as exotic Newcastle disease and avian influenza, the USDA is also encouraging bird owners, particularly in states where there is a large presence of backyard poultry, to report sick birds via that same toll-free number. For more information, visit www.aphis.usda.gov.
Last month, three members of the USAHA Executive Committee visited the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS) National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC). The NWRC is the federal institution devoted to conducting research to resolve problems caused by the interaction of wildlife and society. The Center applies scientific expertise to the development of practical methods to resolve human-wildlife conflicts and to maintain the quality of the environments shared with wildlife. Center research is focused on issues related to agricultural damage, human health and safety (including wildlife diseases), protection of threatened and endangered species, and invasive species control. The NWRC functions as the research arm of WS and has achieved an integrated, multi-disciplinary research program that is uniquely suited to provide scientific information and solutions to wildlife damage problems. Specific Center research activities include:

- Assessing damage and other problems caused by wildlife.
- Investigating the biology and behavior of problem animals.
- Evaluating the impact of wildlife management practices on target species, non-target species, and the environment.
- Developing and improving technology to reduce wildlife problems.
- Supporting registration of management chemicals and drugs.
- Transferring scientific and technical information.

The NWRC is headquartered on the Foothills Research Campus of Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins, Colorado. In 1990 the USDA-APHIS approved the Master Plan for the development of the NWRC at Fort Collins, Colorado. APHIS’ decision to locate NWRC on the CSU campus was based on the establishment of a long-term Memorandum of Understanding with CSU under which CSU would provide approximately 43 acres of land ideally suited for conducting wildlife damage management research. This cooperative relationship and on-site presence of NWRC with CSU combines the academic skills and creativity of scientists at the university with applied, creative research skills of NWRC scientists; brings academic attention to wildlife damage/conflict issues including wildlife disease risks to American agriculture; incorporates wildlife conflict issues into university wildlife management curricula; and increases the availability of trained personnel in this unique specialization to the benefit of both organizations and the American public.

The NWRC has completed construction of much of its Master Plan, including a wildlife science building, an indoor animal research building, about 20 acres of outdoor animal research facilities, and renovation of several laboratories into a small Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) suite, all since 1995. NWRC will break ground on a new invasive species research building in 2005. In addition to these new, modern laboratories and wildlife research facilities, NWRC is also entering the planning stages to construct a stand alone wildlife disease research building on the campus.

The wildlife disease research building, which will be constructed to meet BSL-3 criteria, is the final component of NWRC’s facility Master Plan at its Fort Collins headquarters site. The basic principles underlying the need for this building were presented to APHIS officials in Wildlife Services and Veterinary
Outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus (H5N1) were reported this past winter among domestic poultry in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam. The virus also was responsible for 23 confirmed human cases, including 18 deaths. In June and July 2004, H5N1 activity was reported in domestic poultry in China, Thailand, and Vietnam, indicating new outbreaks or continuation of the winter events. Additionally, investigators have found that the H5N1 virus apparently is widespread among domestic ducks in southern China. The World Health Organization has expressed concern about the threat the virus poses to human health and provides additional information at www.who.int.

Reports of HPAI mortality in wild birds were associated with the winter outbreaks, raising questions related to the possible role of wild birds in the maintenance or transmission of the virus. Although some wild bird mortality was attributed to the H5N1 virus, currently there is no direct evidence to support a role for wild birds in the epidemiology of this virus. However, two events during the last two years suggest that we should keep an open mind. The most recent event was the isolation of an H5N1 virus from a peregrine falcon found dead in Hong Kong during January 2004. The other event occurred during the winter of 2002-2003, with confirmed outbreaks of H5N1 HPAI in two waterfowl parks in Hong Kong. During these outbreaks, mortality was documented in captive wild ducks and flamingos and in free-flying gray herons and a black-headed gull.

It is well established that wild birds represent the reservoir for avian influenza viruses (AIV) worldwide; however, there are no reports of direct transmission of any AIV from wild birds to humans. A wide variety of AIV have been isolated from numerous species in the orders Anseriformes (ducks, geese, and swans) and Charadriiformes (shorebirds, gulls, and terns). These isolates have included all of the currently known AIV hemagglutinin (H) and neuraminidase (N) subtypes that are used to classify these viruses. AIV is transmitted within these wild populations through a fecal/oral route via cloacal shedding of virus and contaminated water. Infection rates in wild birds are dependent on season, location, age, and species. In North American ducks, for example, high infection rates (which can exceed 30 percent) are primarily associated with juvenile mallards during pre-migration staging in late summer, when birds are migrating from northern breeding areas. With shorebirds, consistent isolations of AIV have been reported only from ruddy turnstones during spring migration stopovers at Delaware Bay. In short, the epidemiology of these viruses in wild birds is complex and dependent on behavior as well as species susceptibility to infection.

AIV diversity within these wild populations also presents a complex picture with regard to subtype and virulence. Subtype diversity in wild bird populations does not occur randomly. In duck populations in North America, for example, H3, H4, and H6 subtypes represent the majority of isolates, and this has been a consistent finding for more than 30 years. The H5 and H7 AIV subtypes have been isolated from wild birds, but they are uncommon and, with a single exception, have been nonpathogenic viruses. HPAI H5 and H7 viruses from wild birds are extremely rare. Of the thousands of viruses isolated from wild birds worldwide, only one previously had been associated with either domestic or wild bird mortality. This virus, an H5N3, the first AIV reported from a wild bird species, caused mortality in common terns in South Africa in 1961. The origin of this virus remains unknown and there is no evidence that it persisted in any wild bird population following this single outbreak.

There are some unique observations associated with the Hong Kong waterfowl park outbreaks that deserve attention. At these waterfowl parks, mortality attributable to a HPAI virus (H5N1) was reported from numerous species (Continued on page 9)
USDA Agriculture Research Service Animal Health Program Holds Review

The USDA Agriculture Research Service (ARS) will hold a review of its Animal Health Program (NP 103) on Tuesday October 26 (see USAHA agenda for details). ARS is the principal in-house research agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The mission of the Animal Health Program is to conduct basic and applied research on selected diseases of economic importance to the United States livestock and poultry industries. The goals of the research mission are to produce knowledge and technology to reduce economic losses from infectious, genetic, and metabolic diseases of livestock and poultry. National Program Assessments are conducted every five years to allow ARS to periodically update the vision and rationale of each National Program and assess the relevancy, effectiveness, and responsiveness of ARS research. A full report and program assessment form are available online at www.afmtestlab.ars.usda.gov/surveys/ahnp/survey.htm. The National Program Staff at ARS are also providing an opportunity for customers, stakeholders, and partners to assess the progress made through the National Program and provide input for future modifications to the National Program or the National Program’s research agenda. All are welcome to attend this one-day meeting on October 27th at USAHA in Greensboro, North Carolina, to learn more about the achievements of the USDA-ARS Animal Health Program and to evaluate its impact. Any questions about the program can be directed to:

Cyril G. Gay, DVM., Ph.D or
Robert A. Heckert, DVM, Ph.D
National Program Staff,
ARS, REE, USDA
5601 Sunnyside Avenue
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HPAI and Wild Birds

(Continued from page 8)

of ducks and geese. Although captive, these species represent a group of wild birds (ducks and geese) that have not been previously associated with clinical disease or mortality attributable to AIV infection. In addition, HPAI mortality was documented in captive flamingos and from several free-living birds, including gray herons and a black-headed gull. This is not the first time that an AIV has been isolated from gray herons or black-headed gulls, but, as with ducks, it is the first time that mortality was associated with infection.

With influenza the basic rule is “never say never.” The current H5N1 HPAI outbreaks in domestic poultry in Southeast Asia, the zoonotic potential of this virus, reports of wild and zoo bird mortality associated with this virus, and previous reports of wild bird mortality associated with a closely related H5N1 virus in Hong Kong certainly deserve attention. Mortality associated with the HPAI outbreaks in the Hong Kong waterfowl parks indicates that some H5N1 HPAI viruses may be pathogenic to some wild bird species. However, these results provide little insight into either transmission or maintenance of HPAI in wild bird populations or transmission between wild and domestic avian populations. These unfolding events dramatically underscore the need to better understand the epidemiology of AIV in our wild bird populations and to identify mechanisms for both interspecies transmission and the emergence of HPAI viruses.

(Prepared by David Stallknecht)

From the SCWDS BRIEFS, Vol. 19, No. 4, Revised July 2004

Food Safety Symposium

AAFHV/NASMFID will hold a half-day food safety symposium in conjunction with the United States Animal Health Association (USHA) annual meeting in Greensboro on Sunday morning, October 24, 2004. AAFHV’s board meeting will be held on Saturday, October 23, 2004, 6:00 – 10:00 PM. Visitors are welcome. For registration and further information go to the USAHA’s website at www.usaha.org.
Focus on BSE  
(Continued from page 1)
Veterinary Medical Officer at Washington State University, will provide an “Overview of TSE’s impact on US Agriculture.” These impacts range from economic restraints on trade and consumer confidence to providing assurances of the safety of United States.
Dr. Juergen Richt, Veterinary Medical Officer, is a researcher in the Virology and Prion Diseases Unit at the National Animal Disease Center. He will discuss the “Molecular Characterization of Prion Isolates from Livestock and Cervids,” including the diagnosis of the index case identified in the United States last December.
Dr. Tim Baszler, Veterinary pathologist at Washington State University, will describe the “Pathology and Testing Strategies for BSE.” Dr. Baszler is currently supervising testing and surveillance activities at Washington State University, one of seven U.S. laboratories performing high-volume BSE testing for the USDA.
Dr. Beth Williams, University of Wyoming Pathologist, will describe the Ecology, Epidemiology and Control of CWD as part of the total complex of TSE diseases that must be dealt with in the United States.
There will be an additional Special Session on Saturday afternoon (TSE Diagnostics, Pathology and Epidemiology) featuring five additional scientific session abstracts that deal with diagnostic issues important to detection of BSE. Angus Wear, Senior Veterinary Officer from Newcastle, United Kingdom, will lead off this special session by describing experiences and issues in the ongoing high-volume BSE surveillance program of the UK. Two additional papers on CNS problems in cervids or cattle will demonstrate problems of differential diagnosis related to other neurological diseases.

ANNUAL MEETING  
(Continued from page 1)
speakers will address the importance of animal disease surveillance for early identification and response, ensuring science-based global trade of animals and animal products and protection of public health from newly emerging diseases that are transmissible from animals.
A complete program is available on the USAHA and AAVLD web. The USAHA web can be found at www.usaha.org and click 108th Annual Meeting Information. The AAVLD web can be found at www.aavld.org and click Annual Meeting on the menu.

Check out www.aavld.org for information on the 2004 Annual Meeting

Plenary Session  
(Continued from page 1)
encephalopathy (BSE) and avian influenza (AI).
Dr. Brian Evans, Chief Veterinary Officer for Canada, will provide a regional perspective on animal disease surveillance. As you will recall, Dr. Evans participated in the 2003 joint Plenary Session discussing his country’s experience with the single case of BSE identified earlier that year. While Dr. Evans will not be providing an exhaustive review of continuing BSE activities in Canada, he will address the importance of surveillance for animal diseases, including BSE, to the three countries of North America.
Dr. Lonnie King, Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine, Michigan State University, will be addressing the importance of animal disease surveillance for the protection of public health. Dr. King has been working closely with the Centers for Disease Control on emerging and reemerging zoonotic diseases and addressed this topic at the 2004 Annual Meeting of OIE. He will provide an important perspective to this nation’s animal disease surveillance activities.
Dr. Wayne Martin, Professor of Epidemiology, Department of Population Medicine, University of Guelph, will discuss the basis of epidemiology that contributes to sound surveillance programs for animal disease. Dr. Martin is considered the father of modern veterinary epidemiology in Canada. He is internationally recognized as a key contributor to the development of the discipline. His particular interest is study design principles and epidemiologic methods, and he is coauthor of a book on veterinary epidemiologic research.
Dr. Juergen Richt, Veterinary Medical Officer, National Animal Disease Center, will address the biology and genetics of prion diseases as they affect surveillance and early detection of BSE. Dr. Richt is a member of the Virus and Prion Diseases of Livestock Research Unit and is actively engaged in research on the basic biology and effects of prion diseases. He was extensively involved in confirmation of the first BSE animal detected last December in the United States.
Dr. David Suarez, Veterinary Medical Officer with the USDA Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory, will finish up the Plenary Session by talking about the science and biology behind AI that can impact effective surveillance of this economically important and rapidly transmissible disease of poultry. Dr. Suarez has both research and applied experience with AI and has published extensively in a number of areas related to AI.
Services in 2001, and NWRC was instructed to proceed with the project. The building, with its BSL-3 containment capability, will allow APHIS to conduct much more extensive wildlife disease monitoring, surveillance, and research projects than NWRC currently can conduct in its existing small Biosafety Level 3 suite. These existing facilities are not amenable in content or size to the Center’s current research requirements, let alone the extensive research NWRC is being asked to do in the future. The NWRC will also be able to separate its biocontainment research from all other types of laboratory wildlife research, giving a much greater margin of safety for staff, for the research being conducted, and to NWRC neighbors.

When completed, the NWRC will have the capability to detect and develop control methods for wildlife diseases in free ranging wildlife and will provide the laboratory and animal holding/testing facilities necessary to develop methods to identify, monitor, control and possibly prevent the introduction of wildlife-borne foreign animal diseases into the United States. APHIS scientists will be better able to study the ecology and epidemiology of foreign animal diseases and emerging diseases in wildlife and carry out research concerning the control and possible eradication of some wildlife-related diseases such as chronic wasting disease, West Nile virus, bovine tuberculosis, rabies, brucellosis, pseudorabies, plague, hantavirus, leptospirosis, tularemia, and salmonella. This building also will provide APHIS with increased facilities and capacity for use in responding to emergency situations such as the recent monkeypox incidents.

**Some Recent Wildlife Disease Accomplishments of the NWRC**

Current Wildlife disease research at the NWRC focuses on detecting and monitoring invasive and emerging wildlife diseases and assessing and reducing the risk of disease transmission among wildlife, domestic animals, and humans. Field research is being conducted in Michigan on bovine TB to determine the possible role of small mammals as reservoirs and/or sentinels, to investigate cattle-wildlife interactions and to develop methods to limit this interaction.

Research on wildlife rabies is being conducted to evaluate the efficacy of the USDA Oral Rabies Vaccination Program, to understand the epizootiology of rabies in wildlife populations, and to develop new oral vaccines and baits for wildlife species. Research to determine the ability of urban Canada geese to harbor and disseminate human pathogenic bacteria through fecal contamination of recreational waters and lands has recently been completed, and new research is beginning to investigate wildlife as sources for and disseminators of pathogenic bacteria at confined feeding operations and dairies.

Research has begun to better understand transmission routes of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) between wild and captive cervids. Research on surveillance methodology, risk assessment, wildlife vaccine development, experimental evaluation of wildlife hosts, and field research on understanding the epidemiology of West Nile virus has begun and will expand in 2004.

Field research investigating the source of the monkeypox virus introduced into the United States with the importation of African rodents was conducted in Ghana by a joint Centers for Disease Control-USDA NWRC team. Research on pseudorabies in feral swine and other diseases of wildlife affecting livestock are being conducted at a new field station of the NWRC that was established at Texas A&M-Kingsville University in Kingsville, Texas, in 2004.

### Johne’s Educational Tools

The Johne’s CD, “Johne’s and Beyond,” and a series of three handbooks that provide risk assessment tools are available for ordering from the USAHA office in Richmond.

Order forms can be printed from the subscription/order section of the website www.JD-Rom.com. The order form can be completed and mailed or faxed to USAHA, P. O. Box K227, Richmond, VA 23229 or faxed to 804-285-3210.
Appendix outlining practical guidelines to consider when conducting the BSE risk assessment referred to in the BSE Chapter. New language addressing progeny and “cohorts” of affected cattle, and a change prohibiting the trade of the entire intestinal tract from cattle of any age that originate from countries considered to be of moderate or high risk for BSE were also adopted. No change was made to the listing of tallow (<0.15% protein by weight) as a safe commodity.

A recommendation from the 2003 Annual Meeting directed the Terrestrial Commission to work on revisions to the Chapter on AI. The Commission addressed the need to improve transparency of notification of AI while minimizing unjustified trade restrictions arising from notification of strains of low pathogenicity. This Chapter will be further reviewed during 2004 and re-proposed for adoption in May 2005.

The activities of the permanent Working Group on Animal Welfare were reviewed. OIE efforts in the area of animal welfare began at the May 2001 Annual Meeting. A permanent Working Group was formed and endorsed by the IC the following year. During 2003, a steering committee was formed to plan for the Global Conference on Animal Welfare held this past February 2004. The Working Group recommended the formation of four Ad Hoc groups addressing specific standards on sea transport; land transport; slaughter, including religious slaughter; and depopulation for disease control purposes. During 2004/2005, the Ad Hoc groups will continue to work in their respective areas and one additional Ad Hoc group will be formed to address aquatic animal welfare issues.

The Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission, chaired by Dr. Eva-Maria Bernoth, noted in her report before the IC that her Commission is coordinating more closely with Dr. Thiermann’s Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, especially to harmonize the two Codes. The Aquatic Code is under “overhaul,” in large part, because of the requirement for surveillance for recognition of freedom from infection.

Dr. Vincenzo Caporale, President of the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases, reported that they are working on recommendations for revision of the Terrestrial Code to add a new Appendix on general principles for animal disease surveillance. It will replace both the existing Chapter on surveillance and the Appendix on “general principles and surveillance systems for the recognition of disease free status.”

Dr. Steven Edwards (Weybridge Laboratory-UK), President of the Biological Standards Commission (Biological Commission), discussed the activities of his Commission over the past year. One of the highest priorities of the Biological Commission has been work on the standardization of diagnostic tests, which increases confidence in lab data and facilitates international trade. The first step in standardization is approval by the Commission of a validated reference method for disease testing after which it is incorporated into the Terrestrial Manual. The second step is the preparation and validation of standard reference reagents that have a known performance in the approved reference method. Currently, there are standard methods and reagents for fifteen diseases and work is in progress on avian influenza, BSE, and to extend the use of approved reagents to other serotypes of the agent or other host species.

Because there were no guidelines that specified what is required in a diagnostic assay dossier that is submitted to OIE for evaluation, the OIE has been working to develop a template that will guide the development of an assay validation dossier and procedures to be used to evaluate the data submitted to the OIE. The template will be applied to a limited number of tests to see how it works. In addition, a study will be initiated by a Collaborating Center on methods of serum inactivation so that reference serum panels can be prepared for use in evaluating new diagnostic tests.

See the USAHA website for the full report on the 2004 OIE Annual Meeting.