

New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Memo

To: Veterinarians

From: Nancy E. Halpern, DVM, State Veterinarian

Date: June 25, 2009

Re: Canine Influenza Update

In the past week several dogs have tested positive for canine influenza by PCR and AGID in the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory. Although samples have been received from throughout the state, the positive samples have all been from the central part of the state.

The NJDA Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory can provide diagnostic testing by AGID, HI and PCR.

Laboratory specimen(s), along with a laboratory submission form, may be sent to:

(If sent via courier service):

New Jersey Department of Agriculture
Division of Animal Health Laboratory
John Fitch Plaza, Health and Agriculture Building
Room 201
Trenton, NJ 08625

(If sent via U.S. Postal Service):

NJ Department of Agriculture
Division of Animal Health Laboratory
P.O. Box 330
Trenton, NJ 08625

The Division of Animal Health Laboratory (DAHL) now offers FedEx service with our billable stamps. DAHL supplies the "clinical package" (outer box with required IATA labeling for biological specimens) and billable stamps. One may call for pick up to your practice or choose to have a pre-arranged pick up schedule. Cost for FedEx 2-Day service is \$2.60/lb or FedEx Standard Overnight at \$4.00/lb. If you are interested in this service or have questions, please call 609-984-2293.

Submission forms can be found online at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/ah/pdf/accessionform.pdf>

The two serology tests offered are the AGID (\$6.00) and HI (\$15.00) tests. The AGID detects antibody to general influenza Type A antigens and should be used as a screening test due a high false positive rate. The HI test is more specific as it uses canine influenza antigens. AGID tests generate a positive or negative result while the HI test results are in the form of a titer. All Serology tests require 2 ml blood or 1 ml serum in a red top tube. PCR is the most specific test available as it detects the presence of viral RNA. For PCR, submit a swab from nose or trachea or tracheal wash of febrile dog in a sterile container in BHI or VTM, or send lung tissue sample in sterile container, the fee for each PCR test is \$35.00. Out-of-state veterinarians will be charged an additional fee of \$6.00 per test.

The clinical presentation of canine influenza virus infection closely resembles “kennel cough”. Clinical signs in the affected dogs were labored breathing, nasal discharge and a persistent cough. Presumptive diagnosis may be made based on high fever and soft, gagging cough lasting 10-14 days. Early clinical identification and isolation of suspected cases is recommended. Ideally clinical samples for both paired serology, and PCR should be submitted, as PCR is most likely to be positive during early infection (first week), and serology tests become positive after the first or second week of infection.

Vaccination against canine respiratory diseases is recommended to reduce susceptibility to disease. Furthermore, dogs with unknown history or dog exhibiting early clinical signs should be tested prior to boarding.

Conditional Product License for Canine Flu Vaccine

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced that it has issued a conditional license to Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health for a canine influenza virus (CIV) vaccine.

The vaccine, made from killed virus, is intended to aid in the control of disease associated with canine influenza virus infection, type A, subtype H3N8

APHIS, through its Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB), granted the conditional license following the acceptance of data supporting product purity, safety and a reasonable expectation of efficacy. The safety data included the results of studies that evaluated the product under normal conditions, including field safety trials of the size and scope required for full licensure.

Studies indicate that the vaccine can reduce the incidence and severity of lung lesions, as well as the duration of coughing and viral shedding. The product is administered by injection, and is recommended for use in healthy dogs at six weeks of age or older as an aid in the control of disease associated with canine influenza virus infection.

Under the conditional license, the product may be distributed as authorized in each state, and used by, or under the supervision of, veterinarians. During the one-year conditional license period, the CVB will continue to monitor the product’s performance and will evaluate the company’s progress toward full licensure.

APHIS issues conditional licenses in the event of an emergency situation, limited market or other special circumstance. In this case, the special circumstance was the emergence of a new virus for which there were no existing licensed veterinary vaccines.

Reporting Zoonotic Disease Outbreaks in Kennels, Shelters and Pet Stores

As a reminder, N.J.A.C. 8:23A-1.9 requires veterinarians to report zoonotic disease outbreaks in kennels, shelters and pet stores to their local health department, and are urged to contact NJDHSS and/or NJDA for assistance when they suspect or identify a communicable disease outbreak among dogs, cats and other domestic animals.

Veterinarians observing livestock with suspicious clinical signs should contact the New Jersey Division of Animal Health at (609) 292-3965 or USDA, APHIS, VS at (609) 259-8387. As a biosecurity measure, rubber or latex gloves should be used when handling potentially infected animals. Humans reportedly may contract VS and develop flu-like symptoms that can last four to seven days.