

VOL. 1 ISSUE 1 · FEBRUARY 2024



# MAINE ANIMAL HEALTH

Official Newsletter of the ME Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry -Animal Health



## Welcome

BY DR. STEFANIE BOLAS, DVM

We are excited to kick off 2024 and launch our Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) newsletter. This newsletter aims to share information from the state perspective with veterinarians in Maine. We will include timely news, regulatory updates, welfare information, and any other topics as identified or requested.

2023 was a big year for the ME DACF Animal Health team! We have three new staff members: myself, the State Veterinarian; Dr. Taryn Pearson, the Assistant State veterinarian; and Donna Flint, the Animal Disease Traceability technician. Our well-rounded team includes expertise in many animal health areas important to Maine. You can contact us through our general animal health mailbox at [animalhealth.agr@maine.gov](mailto:animalhealth.agr@maine.gov) or 207-287-3701.

We want to ensure that you can opt in or out to receive these updates in the future. If you do not want to receive our newsletter in the future, please select unsubscribe from your email provider.



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# Maine Animal Welfare Update

[CLICK HERE OR  
SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE  
ANIMAL WELFARE](#)

BY DR. RACHAEL FISKE, DVM

The State of Maine Animal Welfare Program (AWP) is charged with enforcing Maine's civil and criminal animal welfare statutes (laws) and licensing eligible breeding kennels, boarding kennels, animal shelters, pet shops, and research facilities. The AWP staff consists of a director, three office personnel, a field staff supervisor, six District Humane Agents, and ½ of a veterinarian position – that's me. The Humane Agents respond to complaints alleging animal cruelty made to the office using education, providing resources as appropriate, and, if needed, using their regulatory authority. The Humane Agents are also tasked with regular inspection of licensed facilities. As the AWP staff veterinarian, I assist Humane Agents with complaints involving a "veterinary medical issue or complaint" and help with issues or complaints at licensed facilities when a disease control issue is found.



Animal Control Officers (ACOs) are part of the animal care community in Maine. However, they are employed by a municipality and often play a different, more local role in their responses to animal issues, such as responding to stray and escaped dogs and livestock. However, they can investigate animal cruelty complaints within their jurisdiction if the resources exist. ACOs also provide rabies response, control actions, and investigate dangerous and nuisance dog complaints.



As a veterinarian, knowing who to contact about animal care issues is confusing! In general, if veterinarians are looking to work with somebody regarding a rabies response or control issue (a biting domestic animal or an exposed domestic animal), the State Veterinarian's office or Maine CDC are good resources for information purposes and the actual response - enforcement of a 10-day "bite quarantine" or a 4-month exposure quarantine - is completed by the municipal Animal Control Officer, who can be contacted directly. In addition, ACOs investigate allegations of nuisance and dangerous dogs. Concerns regarding animal cruelty, State-licensed facilities, or improper importation of rescue pets should be directed to the Animal Welfare Program by calling 207-287-3846 or emailing [animal.welfare@maine.gov](mailto:animal.welfare@maine.gov).

If you are not sure which agency to contact, or if the situation is different, or you want to speak vet-to-vet before you lodge a complaint – by the way, your complaint is always anonymous, and you/your clinic is protected from civil liability by law – please feel free to reach out ([rachael.fiske@maine.gov](mailto:rachael.fiske@maine.gov)) or call the Animal Welfare Program and ask for a callback from me.



## Key Points

- The 2021 Maine Milk Rule Requires a Milk Ordinance Test NOT a whole herd test
- All animals must have Federally compliant ID to be tested.
- Complete ID must be on all testing forms
- Cows can be milk tested for Brucellosis using the Ring test
- Goats, sheep & bison must be BAPA or CARD blood tested for Brucellosis
- Send Samples to  
ME SFDL  
28 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333  
telephone: (207) 287-7624



## Updates on the Maine Milk Rule for Veterinarians

BY DR. TARYN PEARSON, BVMS, DVM

Each fall, the Animal Health team at DACF gets numerous calls from producers and veterinarians about the latest Maine Milk Rule, which rolled out in 2021. This rule was made to decrease testing costs for raw milk producers while aiming to help protect raw milk consumers from Brucellosis and TB. While NOT a whole herd test as outlined in the 2015 USDA TB & Brucellosis Program Standards, this rule, until further updated, stands in Maine as a Milk Ordinance test. Under this rule, all licensed raw dairy product-producing sheep/goats/water buffalo/cattle, lactating females, and males capable of breeding must be tested every three years for TB and Brucellosis. If the milk is used only to produce aged cheese, is pasteurized, or is heat treated, TB testing is not required under the 2021 Maine Milk Rule. Veterinarians- Incompletely recorded USDA-approved ID or herd tags without USDA Shield is not acceptable under USDA federal Animal ID guidelines. You cannot perform federal tests or CVI papers if the animal does not have a USDA official ID.

Cattle on premises who produce raw dairy products must be milk Ring tested for brucellosis every six months by the Maine Milk Lab & Dairy Inspectors. USDA Accredited Category II veterinarians must complete TB tests. TB testing is not required if the cattle dairy does not produce raw products. Remember, cattle are the only species that the Area TB & Brucellosis Free statuses apply to, which is why the laws and rules governing them are different from sheep, goats, and water buffalo. Please include the entire 840 or NUES tag number for EVERY animal tested.

Sheep, Goats, and Water Buffalo on premises that produce raw dairy products must be TB and Brucellosis blood tested every three years by a USDA Accredited Category II veterinarian because their milk fat composition is not compatible with the milk Ring Test. If the dairy products are heat-treated, pasteurized, or only used for producing aged cheese, then TB testing is not required in Maine.

Continued on next page.....



## Updates on the Maine Milk Rule for Veterinarians

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Sheep and Goats can be identified by USDA Scrapie Program tags or Scrapie tattoos with or without an 840 Microchip embedded in the right tail web. Goats can be identified with Scrapie Tags or breed registry papers with matching tattoos with or without an 840 microchip in the right tail web. Please check any registration papers at the time of tattoo reading for accuracy. Record the checked tattoos, if present, and the 840 microchip on your TB and Brucellosis testing forms, as both are considered part of the entire ID.

Lastly, if raw dairy product producers only want to test a portion of their flock/herd, this is another option. To satisfy the 2021 Maine Milk Rule requirements, they must test a designated number of the herd/flock proportional to herd/flock size determined by the USDA annually. Please get in touch with DACF Animal Health for details.

The USDA has indicated we can use any carbon copy TB and Brucellosis forms or the electronically fillable TB and Brucellosis forms. These forms can be found by visiting the [USDA Website](#). For this purpose, you will want to download forms VS 4-33 and VS 6-22.

If you have questions regarding USDA-compliant ID or TB/Brucellosis testing, please contact DACF Animal Health. We are here to help! Call ME DACF Animal Health at (207) 287-3701.

If you or your clients have questions regarding the Dairy Licensing Program, the appropriate contact is the [Maine Dairy Inspection Program](#) by phone at (207) 287-7627.

## Maine Dairy Inspection Program

Contact for Clients With Milk Quality & Testing (Milk Lab)

- [Linda Stahlnecker](#):  
(207) 287-7623  
[linda.stahlnecker@maine.gov](mailto:linda.stahlnecker@maine.gov)
- [Renee Blaise](#):  
(207)287-7624  
[renee.blaise@maine.gov](mailto:renee.blaise@maine.gov)

CLICK OR SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE [MAINE DAIRY INSPECTION PROGRAM](#)





## Key Points

- Please report your refractory Canine Respiratory diseases to our office so we can continue to monitor prevalence in Maine.
- DACF Animal Health recommends running a Canine Respirator Panel through a diagnostic laboratory such as the University of Cornell, AHDC Lab..
- HPAI is in Maine. If you suspect HPAI please call our office.
- York County = VMLRP area of need open for application



## Hot Topics: Updates on Canine Respiratory Disease, High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), and VMLRP

FROM THE DESK OF THE MAINE ANIMAL HEALTH TEAM

### HPAI:

We first detected HPAI in Maine in 2024 in a small backyard flock in York and Kennebec counties. This detection is an important reminder that HPAI remains present in Maine, as demonstrated by this case and ongoing wild bird detections. USDA APHIS continues to post all recent detections in the United States here: [USDA APHIS | 2022-2023 Detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza](#). Please remind poultry-owning clients that biosecurity is critical, and they can check out tools and resources here: [USDA APHIS | Defend the Flock - Resource Center](#).

### Canine Respiratory Disease:

During the Fall months, we received a lot of inquiries about severe pneumonia cases in dogs in ME. We know many of you saw cases of pneumonia in dogs that lasted longer than usual, were less responsive to typical antibiotics, and potentially more severe. We don't have any new information to share now, but we continue to monitor and will share anything as possible. Please report your refractory Canine Respiratory diseases to our office so we can continue to monitor prevalence in Maine.

### VMLRP:

Maine has three shortage situations identified for the 2024 Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) cycle. The program aims to help veterinarians offset a significant portion of the debt incurred in pursuing their veterinary medical degrees in return for their service in certain high-priority veterinary shortage areas. The Maine-specific details are here: [Veterinary Services Shortage Situations Map | National Institute of Food and Agriculture \(usda.gov\)](#). If you are practicing some amount of time (or willing to) in York County, we highly encourage you to apply for this great opportunity.

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## Announcements & Events

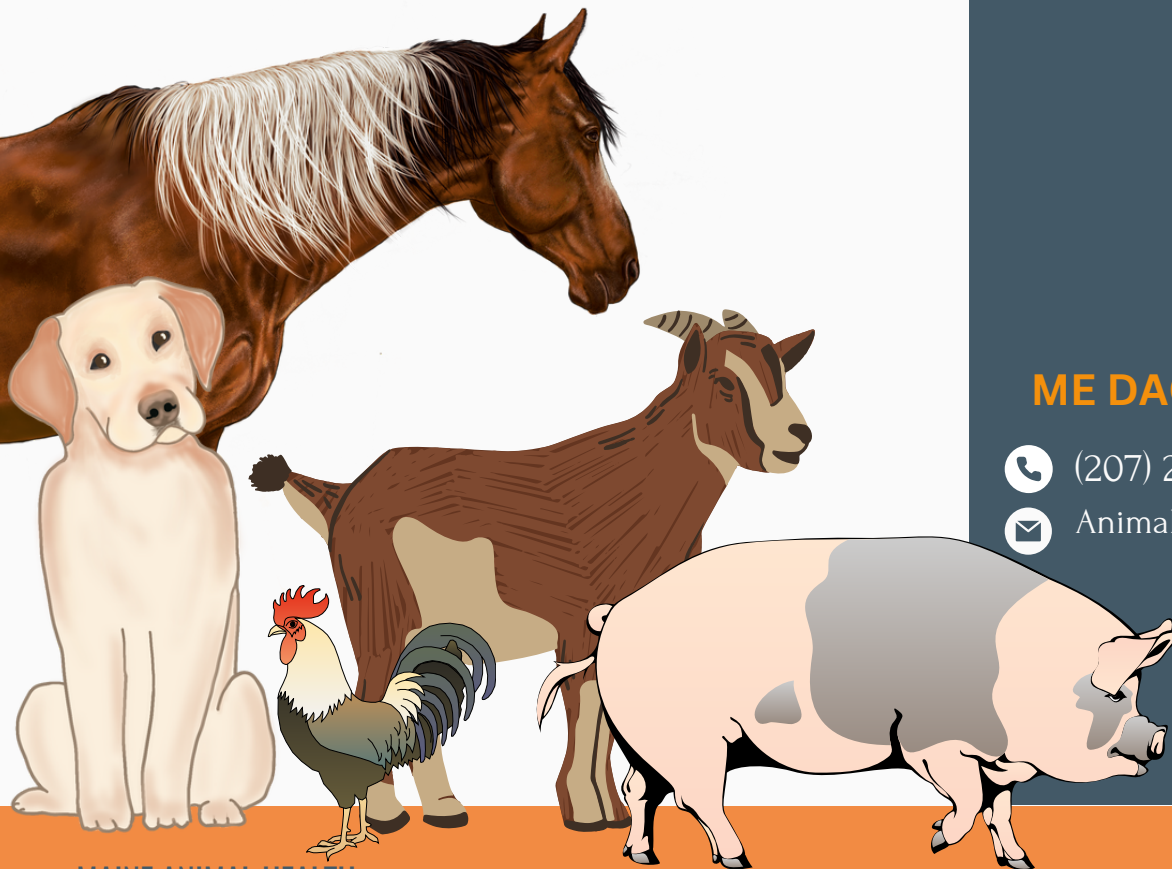
FROM THE DESK OF THE MAINE ANIMAL HEALTH TEAM

### MeCHAP is Back!

Please SAVE THE DATE for an IN-PERSON winter installment of the Maine Cattle Health Assurance Program (MeCHAP), IDEXX, and Maine Veterinary Medical Association-sponsored veterinary CE Series! This next presentation is coming in Augusta on Wednesday, February 14, 8:30-3:30 PM (doors open at 8:15 for check-in) and will focus on cattle, specifically.

## Save the Date

CLICK OR SCAN THE QR  
CODE TO REGISTER FOR THE  
FEBRUARY 14TH MECHAP  
MEETING



### Contact Us ME DACF - Animal Health



(207) 287-3701



AnimalHealth.AGR@maine.gov