The mission of the Animal Health Division is to prevent, suppress, and control any communicable diseases of animals or poultry as mandated by West Virginia law.

Throughout Fiscal Year 2014 the Animal Health Division Livestock Technicians examined over 114,000 animals for signs of disease and proper health-related paperwork at markets, fairs, festivals and on the farm. Animal Health Inspectors examined 68,583 cattle, 7,371 goats, 3,792 equines, 9,820 sheep, 3,909 swine, 21,033 back yard flock poultry, plus various other animals in West Virginia’s fair/festival and livestock marketing systems throughout FY2014.

Office personnel examined Certificates of Veterinary Inspection for 1,889,792 incoming animals (number includes poultry and hatching eggs), and for 10,714 outgoing animals during 2014. Poultry imports inclusively were 3,418,149. Export Numbers were 1,498,814 poultry; 3,244,985 turkey eggs and 129,661,649 chicken eggs. We have 61 Honor Flocks and 41 Caprine Honor Herds that require yearly inspection and 49 Certified and 51 Accredited Herd records maintained.

Our laboratories in Moorefield and Charleston are actively devoted to the front line of defense for disease control. The Moorefield Animal Health Diagnostic Lab is an authorized national Poultry Improvement Plan Lab and a NAHLN (National Animal Health Laboratory Network) laboratory. Moorefield, specializing in poultry issues, conducted 291,387 tests during FY2014. The Charleston Lab is branching out by adding aquaculture testing to our repertoire along with Bluetongue (BT) and Bovine Leukosis Virus (BLV) for cattle export testing.
Animal Disease Traceability (ADT)

Animal Disease Traceability’s goal is the control of disease through the ability to trace an animal from its farm of origin to its ultimate endpoint. A federal rule was passed in March of 2013 that sets a national standard for Animal Disease Traceability.

National Agriculture Statistics Service estimates the number of West Virginia livestock farms at 12,067 out of a total of 21,400 farms. The WVDA’s Animal Health Division has registered approximately 10,015 of those premises.

A producer must have a registered premise to receive official identification ear tags from the Animal Health Division. To date, nearly 40,000 tags of various types have been distributed to growers, veterinarians, or placed on animals by WVDA personnel.

Secure Milk Supply

The Mid-Atlantic Secure Milk Supply (MA-SMS) Plan includes 11 cooperating states who desire to implement this MA-SMS plan to safely move raw milk from the farm to processing in the event of a foreign animal disease such as foot and mouth disease (FMD). These entities agree to implement stringent biosecurity procedures that will protect against the spread of a foreign animal disease, while maintaining the ability to ship and move raw milk safely within and between participating states.

There are 76 Grade A Dairies and one milk processing plant in West Virginia eligible to participate in this program. The West Virginia University (WVU) Dairy Farm has been pre audited and will be a demonstration farm. Four other Dairies which are pilot premises have undergone the pre event biosecurity checklist. These four farms are strategically located in the heart of West Virginia Dairy Industry.

Equine

Animal Health Field Staff monitor markets to ensure proper testing is completed before the sale of all equines. In 2014, 1,093 horses moved through our livestock markets. An allowance was made for equines to be tested at the market and removed to the new owner’s facility and quarantined until negative results are received, after which the equine may move freely within the state. Compliance to the new rule at Pleasure events is exceptionally high.

Poultry Industry

Avian Health Commodity

Avian Health Commodity program began in April 2011, combining and replacing a variety of previous individual agreements. Goals and testing are basically the same, but reporting under one agreement simplifies the process.

Commercial poultry is the state’s largest agricultural sector, with a $325 million annual value of production. Disease surveillance and control is essential to maintaining free international trade and minimizing production losses due to infection.

Because of the risk that wild birds can transmit diseases to domestic birds, the Division must work with non-commercial, or “backyard,” poultry producers, as well as commercial growers. The Division is registering non-commercial poultry owners and has implemented an education program aimed toward owners of backyard flocks, along with small-scale sales operations, such as auctions, farmers markets, and feed stores. The goal is to make these communities aware of good biosecurity practices and the danger avian influenza poses to their birds and West Virginia’s commercial poultry industry.

Field staff continues to test Upland Game Bird Premises. This surveillance is extremely important due to the intimate contact of upland game birds with the migratory bird population.

The Division has had a positive working relationship with commercial poultry producers for a number of years. In the
event of an outbreak, relationships established will expedite the disease control and eradication. The companies are pleased that we can have Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) results in four hours.

This surveillance became even more critical due to the cuts in wildlife service surveillance budget. There will no longer be wildlife surveillance in West Virginia or some critical adjoining states. The upland game bird is now the first line of defense against wild bird contacts. Contacts are made by the field staff to explain the surveillance program and to dispense educational materials.

Scrapie

West Virginia Department of Agriculture Animal Health employees continue to participate in the USDA Scrapie Surveillance Program. The national goal was to eliminate scrapie from the United States by the year 2013. Currently, only New Zealand and Australia are recognized as scrapie free. Scrapie-free status would open markets for American sheep producers on a worldwide scale. The national goal has fallen short of the mark, but Scrapie is far less prevalent than when this program was first implemented.

The scrapie eradication program depends on the identification of sheep and goats back to the last place they lambed or kidded, and if possible, to their farm of birth. Since 2002, our WV markets have worked with the state and federal personnel to ensure identification (ID) placement for all animals required to be identified. As the program advances, the expected level of compliance has increased.

Emerging Diseases

Novel swine enteric coronavirus disease (SECD) is a disease in swine caused by emerging porcine coronaviruses, including porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV) and porcine delta coronavirus (PDCoV). SECD is characterized by an acute, rapidly spreading viral diarrhea of pigs; no other species are known to be affected and it is not a public health threat. Pigs develop varying degrees of diarrhea and loss of appetite. There is 100 percent mortality in pigs less than two weeks of age.

Animal Health received cooperative agreement funding for public outreach and education to protect West Virginia’s swine population and swine producers with emphasis on biosecurity. At this time there are no confirmed cases in West Virginia.

Swine are examined at fairs and festivals and pens are disinfected by Animal Health Technicians (AHT’s) after animals leave.

Guthrie Laboratory Testing and AHMS Agreement Reporting

Identification, eradication and maintenance of disease-free status are essential functions of the Animal Health Division to avoid import and export restrictions on West Virginia livestock. Testing records are maintained by division employees for both tuberculosis and brucellosis.

During fiscal year 2014, the Guthrie Animal Health Laboratory conducted Brucella BAPA (Buffered Acidified Plate Antigen) on 2,542 bovine samples and 59 swine samples. Additional brucellosis testing on bovine samples includes 170 Brucellosis Ring tests. Caprine card brucellosis (10-G) tests were run on 99 samples, while other species card tests (10-S) were run on an additional 85 samples. Pseudorabies testing was conducted on 56 specimens.

Enzyme Linked Immunoassay (ELISA) procedures were utilized on 227 samples to test for the presence of Johne’s disease, and 152 samples were tested for Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis (CAE). In FY14 the Division added 57 ELISA BLV (Bovine Leukemia Virus) testing that we didn’t do in FY13.

Coggins testing for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) was conducted on 11,028 specimens, while 14 specimens underwent confirmatory testing utilizing Agar Gel Immunodiffusion (AGID) methods.
The Guthrie laboratory analyzed 62 samples for the presence of Leptospirosis. This bacterial disease affects many species, including dogs, cats, cattle, and horses.

During the fiscal year specimens were submitted for cultural testing. Of these specimens, 635 were antimicrobial sensitivities, and 37 were fecal floatations.

The lab added Bluetongue Virus (BT) and Bovine Leukemia Virus (BLV) ELISA testing in Spring 14. Additionally, we added the testing of the cattle for export at that time. While we added that testing FY14, we didn’t start receiving any appreciable numbers until FY15. These tests were added for export testing and lab staff completed proficiency testing for BLV and BT.

Private Practitioners are continuing to submit reportable diseases from their practice. We share this information with public health at Zoonotic Task Force Meetings to compare hot spots of infection in the animal and human population.

The main reportable disease this year was Lyme disease in canines, which has directly correlated with the incidents in the human population.