

# Illinois Department of Agriculture Animal Disease Laboratory

## Laboratory Notes

January 1, 2016

### Meet the Staff

Brenda Shepherd started working at the lab 14 years ago in the serology department as a laboratory



associate. Currently she works in the virology department as a microbiologist and has done so since 2012. Brenda does our rabies testing, FA (fluorescent antibody) testing, remains certified for all serology testing, and prepares many buffers, solutions, and control slides.

Brenda graduated from Southern Illinois University in 1998 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology. She lives in Oneida, IL with her high school sweetheart Daniel Eagle. They share their home with 4 cats. Brenda is an avid bird watcher, loves rock & roll music from the 60's & 70's, enjoys gardening, the great outdoors and spending time with her nieces and nephews.

### Retirement announcement

Greg Fritz, longtime staff member, retired on December 31, 2015. Greg has worked for the state for 38 years. Greg started working in the histology and clinical pathology sections of the laboratory in 1976. He then left state service for a year, working at a chemical plant in Mapleton, Illinois. He returned to the laboratory in 1979 and was assigned to the serology and virology section, working in those areas until 1989 when he became the supervisor of the serology/virology section. In 1996, a diagnostic molecular biology section was added to the laboratory and Greg assumed a supervisory role in that area as well as serology and virology. The molecular biology section (polymerase chain-reaction tests) has expanded to include a number of foreign animal disease tests (avian influenza,

Newcastle disease, foot and mouth disease, and classical swine fever) as well as a number of diagnostic tests, including swine influenza virus, porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus infection and bovine virus diarrhea. Recently, molecular biology testing has expanded to include a number of food safety tests. In 2014, Greg was the recipient of the Illinois Department of Agriculture Director's Award for outstanding service and dedication to state service. We wish him well in retirement.

### Forms on Website

If you haven't visited the updated IDOA website lately, please do so. The Department of Agriculture website has been overhauled and updated with lots of helpful information. Our web page, found under the "Animals" section of the website, has also been revised. The forms for serology submissions, commodity requests, and our standard laboratory submission form are all present on our web page in fillable formats. Also on the website is our Animal Disease Laboratory Tests and Fees schedule which will give you an idea of turn-around time, sample(s) to submit, and cost per test.

Go to <http://www.agr.state.il.us/laboratory-services/>

Remember that numbered commodity items (tags or certificates) and tuberculin must be assigned to an individual licensed accredited veterinarian rather than just to a practice.

### Seneca Valley Virus

Several outbreaks of a swine vesicular disease, now known to be Seneca Valley virus, have occurred around the Midwest in the late summer and fall of 2015.

The clinical signs and gross lesions of SVV are indistinguishable from vesicular foreign animal dis-

eases (FAD) including foot and mouth disease (FMD), vesicular stomatitis (VS), and swine vesicular disease, making rapid response imperative. Cases of vesicular diseases must be investigated as FADs until an FAD can be ruled out. Veterinarians finding vesicles on the snouts and/or coronary bands of swine should immediately contact the State Veterinarian or State USDA office for instructions.

### Avian Influenza

Avian influenza (AI) hit the country hard last spring and resulted in the depopulation of over 230 premises. Somehow, the disease managed to miss Illinois, but we may not be so lucky next spring. The disease generally follows migrating waterfowl.

The laboratory does testing for AI, both serum tests (AGID) and oropharyngeal swabs for polymerase chain-reaction (PCR) testing. The PCR tests require special swabs and a transportation medium, both of which are available from the laboratory. If you have questions, contact the laboratory.

### Laboratory Calendar

Please be aware that, along with all other state agencies, the diagnostic laboratory is closed on the following days:

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King Day  
Lincoln's Birthday  
President's Day  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Columbus Day  
General Election Day  
Veteran's Day  
Thanksgiving and the day after  
Christmas Day  
As always, submissions can be left in the night depository on the northeast side of the building.