



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
ANIMAL HEALTH
28 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0028

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL
COMMISSIONER

March 20, 2020

Dear Maine Veterinarians,

I hope this letter finds you well despite our uncertain health and economic situation. I'm inspired by the stories of generosity - veterinary clinics contacting the MVMA to ask if they can donate PPE - and creativity - Town of Dexter organizing newly homebound teenagers to assist, at a suitable distance, elders in that community - that have surfaced during this strange time. We WILL make it through this. As I say to my great colleagues on the ME DACF Animal Health team: *Luctor et emergo*.

I'm sure you are staying up to date on the latest information about COVID 19 and its impact on Maine and our profession. Recommendations are changing rapidly and likely you are incorporating that information into your determinations of how best to protect yourselves, your staff, your patients and clients.

We at the DACF are doing the same. Our adjustments in response to the spread of COVID 19 in our state include cancelling all non-essential travel, postponing non-essential trainings, conferences and meetings, and working remotely whenever possible. *These changes will not impact our ability to support the critical veterinary services that you provide during this public health disease response.* Please refer to the following updates:

Lab services: Kate Hayford at the Federal-State Diagnostic Lab in Augusta will continue to receive samples as usual for routine diagnostic testing (dairy herd certification testing, Coggin's testing, etc.). All samples arriving by hand delivery are requested to be deposited on the table outside the restricted access door to the lab. **Please call the lab to notify them** that you have left samples there for them to collect. Supplies, including official NUES ID tags, are available by request and will left on this table as well. The lab can be reached at **(207) 287-7624**. The Veterinary Diagnostic Lab at the University of Maine is also continuing to accept diagnostic samples as of the date of this letter. Please call 207-385-6514 or 541-324-1912 before sending or bringing in samples to confirm the lab's status. You can also access updates on the [UMaine VDL website](#).

Reportable Animal Disease: Please continue to utilize the electronic reporting database for suspect or confirmed reportable animal diseases. The automated reporting form can be accessed [here](#). Don't hesitate to call your favorite State Veterinarian if you have any questions about your reportable case.

Animal Movement Documentation: Requests for livestock import permit numbers will continue to be answered on the main Animal Health contact line - **(207) 287-3701**. Please leave a message for Cathie Preyer and she can assist you Monday-Friday, 8am to 5 pm. Health Certificates will continue to be processed.

MICHELE WALSH, DVM
STATE VETERINARIAN
90 BLOSSOM LANE, DEERING BUILDING



PHONE: (207) 287-3701
FAX: (207) 287-7548
WWW.MAINE.GOV/DACF

Contacts: Your state Animal Health team will continue to provide field services and support from remote office locations. We are all available via email and telephone. Please utilize the following phone numbers for reaching us during this period:

Dr. Michele Walsh: 207 215-6727

Dr. Rachael Fiske: 207 592 3608

Dr. Carolyn Hurwitz: 207 592 6698

Dr. Jennifer Eberly (*Meat Inspection/Food Safety*): 207 215 0948

Main Animal Health line: 207 287 3701

You should also be aware that **veterinary medicine is classified as an essential service and has been exempted from the Governor's restrictions placed on some other businesses in the wake of COVID 19.** You are needed during this time to continue to provide services that support a safe and reliable food supply, conduct disease surveillance and prevention activities, and safeguard animal welfare. Services such as slaughter plant inspections, reportable disease laboratory testing, and inspections for animal movement and marketing will continue. Veterinary care for ill or injured animals and vaccinations for diseases of high consequence are all essential services provided by the veterinary profession. Rabies vaccinations for pets in Maine continue to be of critical importance. *Rabies is an endemic animal and public health threat in Maine, therefore initial rabies vaccines for animals in high risk areas and booster vaccinations for exposed animals are priority services* which can only be provided by a veterinarian in our great state.

There is an abundance of information readily available about this virus and recommended responses for all sectors of the veterinary and agricultural industries. Many veterinary clinics have already incorporated curb-side and telemedicine services, increased frequency of environmental decontamination procedures, and are limiting services to prevent staff exposure and conserve resources. **The Department has recently published a [website](#) that collects high quality resources for veterinarians, livestock producers and the animal shelter community.** This site will continue to be updated as new information becomes available. We also refer you to the excellent resources compiled by the [Maine Veterinary Medical Association](#) and the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#).

Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of your Animal Health team contacts with questions or concerns.

Thank you for all you do for the citizens and animals of Maine. Stay well and take care of each other!

Sincerely,

Dr. Michele Walsh, Dr. Carolyn Hurwitz & Dr. Rachael Fiske
Your State Veterinarians, at your service