

Issue 58 December 2021

OLPC 2022 Membership Meetings

- February 11, 2022
- April 22, 2022
- June 17, 2022
- August 12, 2022 – shortened agenda
- October 14, 2022
- December 16, 2022

Atypical BSE in Alberta

On December 17th, CFIA notified the OIE of a case of atypical bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in an 8.5-year-old beef cow in Alberta. The detection and reporting of an atypical BSE case will not affect the OIE negligible risk status of Canada and market access for Canadian animals and beef products should be unaffected.

Enhanced Biosecurity for African Swine Fever Preparedness Initiative

In October, OMAFRA announced the Enhanced Biosecurity for African Swine Fever Preparedness Initiative. The program is open to producers, processors, and other agri-businesses across the pork value chain to enhance their biosecurity and emergency preparedness against ASF. Funding of 50% up to a maximum of \$40,000 is available. Projects are approved on a first come, first served until March 21, 2022 or while funding remains available from the \$2.25 million earmarked for the program. More details can be found [here](#).

Increasing Deadstock Capacity Initiative

OMAFRA is also offering an Increasing Deadstock Capacity program for livestock producers, other agri-businesses and municipalities to increase capacity for deadstock management. The program offers 50% cost share up to a maximum of \$25,000 per applicant. Applications will be accepted on a first come, first served basis until January 31, 2022 or while funding remains available. More details regarding the cost share program are available [here](#)

Rabies Numbers in Canada

As at the end of November, there have been 2,317 samples submitted in 2021 for rabies testing from across Canada.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Found in Newfoundland

H5N1 (highly pathogenic avian influenza) has been found on a non-commercial, multi-species farm in the Avalon Peninsula region of Newfoundland. There were 419 birds located at this premises, 360 died from the disease and the remaining 59 were euthanized. At this time the virus has not been found elsewhere in the region, but surveillance and biosecurity measures will both be enhanced. A protection zone (3 km) and a surveillance zone (10 km) have been put in place around the infected premises. Statements from CFIA can be found at the links below.

- [CFIA Statement: Detection of high pathogenic avian influenza \(H5N1\) in Newfoundland and Labrador 2021](#)
- [Notice to Industry: Detection of high pathogenic avian influenza \(H5N1\) in an exhibition farm in Canada](#)

Pigeon Paramyxovirus

In October and November, Pigeon paramyxovirus type 1 virus (PPMV-1) was reported at two racing pigeon premises in Ontario. PPMV-1 is a virulent variant of Newcastle disease virus. The birds will be kept under observation for 60 days and facilities cleaned and disinfected before release from quarantine. In the past, PPMV-1 has been reported in chickens and turkeys in association with respiratory disease or decreases in egg production.

African Swine Fever in the Caribbean

Haiti has reported 11 ASF outbreaks across four departments in the North and South regions of the country. The Dominican Republic has reported outbreaks in all but three of its provinces. CFIA has launched a Don't Pack Pork Campaign targeting air travel departures to the Caribbean. The campaign will intensify as we move into the colder months until the end of March. There have also been Canadian border blitzes on goods imported from the Caribbean through the low value courier stream. No pork products have been found.

The OIE has published the U.S. self-declaration of a protection zone for U.S. territories in the Caribbean (Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands). You can download the document [here](#).

CanSpot Surveillance

CanSpot surveillance is relatively new, risk-based testing conducted at approved laboratories. The goal is early detection of African swine fever (ASF) should it appear in Canada. Rule-out testing on eligible cases began in August 2020 and has occurred in all regions. Eligible cases can be sent for testing at the request of the herd practitioners or labs. The next phase, currently in planning, will include enhanced surveillance testing of abattoir condemnations and more ASF testing of small-holding swine. More information on CanSpot surveillance can be found [here](#)

Testing Deer for COVID

SARS-CoV-2 was found in three white-tailed deer after samples were taken between November 6th and 8th in the Eastern Townships region in Quebec. These were the only samples in which the virus was detected out of 156 samples analyzed from Quebec so far. While Quebec was the first province to collect and submit samples for analysis, the work is continuing across Canada in an effort to monitor the spread of the virus.

Nationally, 101 samples tested positive. Ontario accounted for 1,239 samples of which 41 tested positive. The breakdown from which species the positive samples were taken are as follows:

	Can.	Ont.
Arctic fox	2	
Bat	51	27
Bovine	2	
Cat	2	
Dog	6	1
Llama	1	
Raccoon	2	2
Red fox	9	
Skunk	26	11
Total	101	41

A horse in Perth originally tested positive for rabies but subsequent testing determined the first result to be a false positive. Only two false positives have been recorded in the past 40 years.

Provincial Animal Welfare Services

From January to December 2021, the Ontario Animal Protection Call Centre received 42,200 calls leading to 18,800 inspections or investigations. Of the investigations, 708 were livestock and 595 were equine. Therefore, inspections of agricultural operations account for approximately 3% of total inspections conducted during that period.

Blastomycosis

Constance Lake First Nation, a community of over 900 residents in Northern Ontario, has experienced an outbreak of blastomycosis. As of December 16th, there were 22 confirmed cases and four deaths since the outbreak began in November. Over 120 people are under surveillance. Blastomycosis is a lung infection which is typically caused by a fungus that grows in moist soil, leaves and rotting wood. If disturbed, spores can spread through the air but is not spread from one person to another. Symptoms range from a mild cough to serious breathing problems. It can have an extended incubation period of weeks to months. If the infection is diagnosed early, it can be treated with an antifungal. Outbreaks are not common. Environmental sampling is underway to determine the source of the fungus.

This is the first time the virus has been found in wild animals in Canada, though globally it has already infected various species that are domesticated or kept in captivity, including farmed mink, cats and dogs, and animals in zoos such as tigers, gorillas, hippopotamus, cougar, and otters. The virus has already been detected in deer in the United States, and [a study](#) published earlier this month showed SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in 40% of blood samples collected from deer in Illinois, Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania in 2021.

Ontario sample collection has just finished and will be analyzed along with 2020 samples originally collected for Chronic Wasting Disease. Results should be available in the first quarter of 2022.

Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease in Ontario

At the December OLPC meeting, members heard a presentation by OMAFRA and Ministry of Northern Development, Natural Resources and Forestry staff regarding Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease (EHD).

EHD is transmitted by midges and can infect deer, cattle, bison, sheep and goats. Deer infected by the virus show clinical signs of fever, weakness, excessive salivation, extensive oral ulceration, hemorrhages and edema. In other species, symptoms are usually mild or non-existent. There is no vaccine and no specific treatment other than providing support care of symptoms.

EHD rarely affects livestock in Canada however it is endemic in southern U.S. and is becoming more common in the northern states and Canada. In the U.S., outbreaks are frequent but mild. In Canada, it is more severe as the deer population has no pre-existing immunity. Outbreaks typically occur in late summer especially after a hot, dry summer. Transport of midges is aided by strong winds.

The first recorded case of EHD in Ontario was in 2017 when a few deer died in London. This year, 20 to 30 dead deer were reported on Wolfe Island, Gananoque Lake, Kingston and Amherstburg. Outbreaks are generally short-lived as frost kills off midges. The Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative is monitoring EHD. Currently, there is no surveillance of midges. More information can be found on the OMAFRA website [here](#).

Animal Health Act

OMAFRA recently approved a new regulation under the provincial Animal Health Act, 2009. Regulation 849/21: Prescribed Hazards will come into force on January 1, 2022. The regulation can be viewed at [e-laws](#). The basic change is an expansion of “hazards” to include surplus animals arising from a market disruption as below:

Surplus livestock, poultry

1. For the purposes of clause (c) of the definition of “hazard” in section 2 of the Act, any surplus of livestock or poultry in the Province is prescribed as a hazard if,
 - (a) the surplus is caused by restrictions on the movement of the livestock, poultry or related animal products within Ontario or across interprovincial or international borders; and
 - (b) the restrictions referred to in clause (a) were imposed due to concerns about a disease or a biological, chemical, physical or radiological agent or factor.

OMAFRA is continuing to review input received regarding expanding the list of notifiable hazards and may set up expert panels for further consultations on hazards.

Our Mission

Provide a forum to facilitate the development and coordination of an Ontario strategy to deal with foreign animal disease and other transmissible livestock and poultry diseases.