



# USAHA News Release

United States Animal Health Association

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*For immediate release:*

## RABIES AND AVIAN INFLUENZA HIGHLIGHTED AT COMMITTEE MEETING

Reno, Nev., Oct. 23, 2007 - Rabies and avian influenza were the two main topics discussed at the meeting of the U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA) Committee on Rabies and Public Health here this week.

In an update on wildlife-related activities it was noted that canine variant rabies has been eliminated in Texas, but that gray fox variant rabies continues to be a problem in both foxes and coyotes. There is on-going work to improve the efficacy and delivery systems for oral bait rabies vaccine. Collaborative work continues with both Canada and Mexico to address rabies disease along the borders.

The committee also received an overview on World Rabies Day 2007. It was estimated that there are some 55,000 human deaths from rabies annually. World Rabies Day was a multi-partner effort to bring attention to rabies around the world. In the United States, there were 77 events with participation by 25 colleges of veterinary medicine. Seventy-three countries participated. The next World Rabies Day is scheduled for Sept. 28, 2008.

Another report dealt with surveillance for high-pathogenic H5 or H7 avian influenza in the United States in 2006 and 2007. The focus of efforts in 2006 was in Alaska and in 2007 surveillance efforts there were expanded. With more than 27,000 birds tested, no high-pathogenic avian influenza was found. Low-pathogenic avian influenza was found in 2.7 percent of the birds tested. A total of 392 different viruses of varying H and N types have been found to date. No H5N1 has been found.

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