

In April 2012, the USDA announced the detection of atypical bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in a California dairy cow. This recent discovery of a fourth cow with BSE demonstrates the crucial role that the veterinary profession plays in keeping the nation's food supply safe. Veterinarians protect the food supply chain through active animal disease surveillance programs. By performing BSE and other foodborne zoonotic disease testing, veterinarians are able to protect the public. Veterinarians not only protect the public through preventative testing, but they also play a key role in investigating the source of any zoonotic outbreaks and helping to derive a solution. The central goal of these efforts can be summarized by the AVMA One Health Initiative, which is founded on the idea that human, animal, and environmental health are all linked and is dedicated to improving the lives of all species. This unified idea of medicine illustrates the integral role veterinarians possess in preventing human disease.

The USDA uses science-based surveillance programs in order to detect foodborne zoonoses in animals. The California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory (CAHFS) plays a key role in protecting the animal health and food safety infrastructure. "We are always on the lookout for new and emerging diseases as well as foreign animal diseases so that we can detect them before they become a major economic catastrophe or a threat to public health," says Hailu Kinde, DVM, MPVM, DACVM, DACPV, interim director of the CAHFS. "The faculty and staff of our laboratories are dedicated to high-quality service for our animal industry and CAHFS is the backbone of California agriculture." All U.S. cattle are required by law to be inspected by a veterinarian before going to harvest, and any high-risk animals are identified for BSE testing. High-risk animals are defined as those exhibiting signs of central nervous system disorders, non-ambulatory animals and other animals exhibiting symptoms consistent with BSE that die on-farm. Approximately 40,000 high-risk animals are tested annually. Dr. Michael Lairmore from the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine comments on the relationship veterinarians have in securing the nation's food supply, "While not usually in the public eye, these unique networks of highly trained scientists and staff truly provide a safety network for all of us. The veterinary profession, through active animal disease surveillance programs, is another example of 'One Health' at work in preventing human disease." Veterinarians work to secure the food supply at all levels of the food chain, which as a result protects the health of humans, animals, and the ecosystem and is the basis of the One Health Initiative.

The future of the veterinary profession is ever-evolving as the need for food animal veterinarians increases. The veterinarians involved in animal disease surveillance programs are not only protecting the health of other animals, but also shielding the public from foodborne diseases. This central idea is expressed in the One Health Initiative's mission statement, which recognizes that human, animal, and ecosystem health are all inextricably linked. The recent detection of BSE in a California dairy cow reaffirms that veterinarians are absolutely vital in safeguarding our nation's food supply.

"CAHFS a Valuable Partner to Veterinarians." *CVMA*. July 2009. Web. 28 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.cvma.net/doc.asp?id=20728>>.

"Mission Statement." *One Health Initiative*. Web. 28 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.onehealthinitiative.com/mission.php>>.

"USDA Announces BSE Identified in California Cow." *UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine - News & Events*. UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, 25 Apr. 2012. Web. 28 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/whatsnew/article.cfm?id=2533>>.