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Welcome to VMO Observer!

VMO Observer: A VS 2015 Pilot Project for FADDs

This project creates a nationwide communication network for VS personnel who are responsible for conducting or coordinating animal disease investigations. Through its website and email list, VMO Observer serves as a central hub and forum for sharing and discussing case reports, diagnostic challenges, and tips and techniques for animal disease investigation. Through the VMO Observer website, and through personal and professional connections made through VMO Observer, members can share their expertise and tap into the knowledge of a large network of VS animal disease investigators. Members include VS field veterinary medical officers and epidemiologists. Site content is reviewed by a team of volunteer moderators with help from a cadre of subject matter experts.

Share your knowledge!

To learn more about what VMO Observer has to offer and how you can contribute, see the [Resources](#) section of [About VMO Observer](#), and the [Participate](#) section of our [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

- Submit a post, or comment on another post, in one of these three categories.
 - [Case Reports](#)
 - [SuperVMO](#)
 - [What's Your Diagnosis?](#)

Click [here](#) to learn more.

- Help build a better FAD kit by taking our FAD Kit Survey (coming soon!). Let us know which items in the kit are most or least useful to you, how you use the kit, and what would make it better.
- Submit photos to the [Photos from the Field](#) library.
- Have a presentation that can be used for outreach or education? Upload it to our [Presentations](#) library.
- Contribute to [WikiFADI](#). We welcome your contributions to make this the go-to place for VS foreign animal disease investigators and epidemiologists to find the information they're looking for. WikiFADI is built and edited by you, to tailor to your needs.
- Provide [feedback](#) on the site. We're eager to hear from you.

Please review the [Discussion Tips](#) and [Confidentiality Plan](#) prior to posting.

Resources for you

To learn more about these resources, see the [Resources](#) section of [About VMO Observer](#).

- [Case Reports](#), [SuperVMO](#), and [What's Your Diagnosis?](#) Posts and comments from your fellow field investigators and epidemiologists, and other subject matter experts, to help you in your work.
- [LabNotes](#): The latest news from the diagnostic labs.
- [Photos from the Field](#): A gallery of photos on a wide range of topics, including disease lesions, biosecurity, exotic livestock, and sampling.
- [Presentations](#): An electronic repository of presentations by and for VMO Observer members to use in outreach or educational activities.
- [WikiFADI](#): All kinds of useful information on conducting foreign animal disease investigations.
- VMO Observer email digest (coming soon!). Emailed every two weeks to VMO Observer members.
- RSS feeds of new posts.

Need help using the site? See [How to Use VMO Observer](#).

Questions about the project? Contact the [Project Team](#).

Share Your Knowledge!

[Submit a Post](#)

Photo of the Month



Post of the Month

The place to recognize your peers, and bask in your own recognition, for outstanding contributions to VMO Observer. Click on the link below to read this month's winning post.

[See a link to your post here!](#)

The Post of the Month is awarded to each month's VMO Observer post that is the most informative and engaging for the VMO Observer community. Posts are nominated and voted on by the Project Team, with the final award decision made by the Editor.

Gallery of Prizes

You, too, could be the proud owner of a coveted Plum Island mug, or any of a passel of other fabulous prizes that we award for [Post of the Month](#). Click on the image below to see a sampling of prizes.

Technical questions or suggestions about the site? Contact the [Site Administrator](#).



Latest posts: Click on the links below to read and comment on the latest news from your fellow investigators.

[View slide show](#)

1/14/2011

Case Report: Pot-bellied pig, swinepox, FL, confirmed

Submitted by Dr. Sue Loerzel, Area Epidemiology Officer, Florida. This investigation occurred in 2003.

Abstract: A 6-week-old male pet pot-bellied pig of unknown origin presented with severe, crusty, coalescing erosions on the skin of the snout and on the coronary bands of all four hooves. Also, there were multiple crusty, circular, well-demarcated pustules and erosions 1 cm or less in diameter on the skin of the flanks. The pig was afebrile. An FADD collected samples and sent them to FADDL, where swinepox was confirmed as the diagnosis.

History: The owner had purchased the pot-bellied piglet from an unidentified man selling a litter of pigs out of the back of a truck parked on the roadside of a suburban neighborhood. The owner kept the pig (named "Ralph") indoors at his home on a 2 acre property in an equestrian community, along with an adult pot-bellied pig and several dogs. On the day following the purchase of the pig, the owner noticed skin lesions on the pig's head and legs, and took the animal to a mixed animal clinic. After examining the pig, the private practitioner suspected a vesicular condition, isolated the animal in the clinic's small animal kennel, and called a state VMO stationed nearby. The state VMO, who was not an FADD, agreed with the practitioner's assessment of a possible FAD and reported the case to the VS area office. The AVIC assigned a VS FADD to investigate.

Investigation: The VS FADD observed the clinical signs described above. The FADD's differential diagnosis list included erysipelas, exudative dermatitis, swinepox, vesicular stomatitis (VS), vesicular exanthema of swine (VES), swine vesicular disease (SVD), and foot and mouth disease (FMD). The owner opted to euthanize the piglet, which was purchased for diagnostic purposes for the amount of the purchase price the previous day. Appropriate and timely disposal options were limited at the location, and the piglet was small; therefore, the entire carcass was sent to FADDL via overnight courier, along with whole blood in EDTA and serum.

Actions: The clinic and the owner's premises were placed under state quarantine. While the FAD investigation was in progress, state and federal animal health technicians worked together to conduct neighborhood surveillance. Swine, goats, cattle, horses, and llamas were present on premises adjacent to the owner's home, the roadside sales location, and the veterinary clinic. Investigators recorded the locations, but did not place any additional quarantines. Despite a county-wide search, the roadside pig seller was never identified.

Laboratory findings: On the same day that the samples were received by FADDL, pox virus was identified in the pig's tissues by electron microscopy. Serum and tissue tests for FMD,

Nondisclosure statement

Access to the VMO Observer SharePoint site is restricted by password or Active Directory. Information posted to the site is for training or educational purposes only, and is not to be distributed outside of the VMO Observer membership.

VS, SVD, and VES were negative.

Moderator comments: A thorough and timely investigation.

There is a summary of swinepox in the on-line Merck Veterinary Manual:

<http://www.merckvetmanual.com/mvm/index.jsp?cfile=htm/bc/71106.htm&word=swinepox>.

It is typically an acute but mild infection of young pigs. It is endemic in the U.S., and apparently only affects swine. Biting lice can transmit the infection. [moderator BB]

Posted at 11:09 AM by [Kotowski, Ingrid K](#) | Category: [Case Reports](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Email this Post](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

1/5/2011

SuperVMO: Cold weather investigation tips

Will adding propylene glycol to disinfectant to prevent freezing at 0° C change efficacy and properties?

I have taped hand warmers to my wrist over the superficial blood vessels to keep my hands warm in just nitrile gloves. Hand warmers can also be used to prevent blood and tissue sample from freezing.

Disposable boots are extremely slippery and dangerous on snow and ice. When it is necessary to wear disposable boots on ice or snow, I have laced manila or sisal cord over the disposable boots and held in place with duct tape to create a tread. Keep duct tape warm prior to use for best adhesion.

Euthanasia solutions need to be kept warm prior to use both for the humane issues and ease of injecting the solution.

Submitted by Tim Deveau.

(Editor's note: An excellent question and some great tips. VMOs, do you have other cold weather investigation tips, or a reference for the efficacy of a disinfectant/propylene glycol mixture? Please add to this discussion by posting a comment.)

Posted at 1:11 PM by [Gauthier, Julie L](#) | Category: [SuperVMO](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Email this Post](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

LabNotes: NAHLN Newsletter

Check out the latest issue as well as archived issues of the "NAHLN Quarterly" [here](#).

The "NAHLN Quarterly" is the official newsletter of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network. This newsletter serves as a vehicle for stakeholder communication. It provides information on the goings on at the various NAHLN laboratories, including spotlights on personnel and updates on surveillance results, procedural documents, contact information, upcoming events, and many more issues that relate to the NAHLN laboratories and their users.

If you would like to subscribe to the "NAHLN Quarterly" you can do so by clicking the "Join Our Mailing List" box at the bottom of the first page. This newsletter is a terrific resource that can help keep you in touch with all of the NAHLN laboratories.

Posted at 10:07 AM by [Gauthier, Julie L](#) | Category: [LabNotes](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Email this Post](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

11/19/2010

SuperVMO: Collecting on-farm brain samples

Collecting on-farm brain samples from CNS cattle was a dilemma in my district. We needed to send brain samples to both the county public health laboratory for rabies testing, and the NAHLN lab for testing for BSE and other CNS disorders. Each lab preferred to have the whole brain!

At first, we sent the heads to the public health lab, asking them to forward the remaining material to the NAHLN lab. That didn't work: either it didn't happen, or the remaining material wasn't usable.

Then, we removed the brain in the field and split the brain sagittally, sending one hemisphere to public health lab, and the other hemisphere plus the obex to the NAHLN lab.

I made sure that only rabies vaccinated personnel were doing this sampling in the field (or hanging around nearby) and we wore face shields, latex gloves, and cut-resistant gloves for PPE.

I'd like to hear how you handle these cases in your area.

Julie

Posted at 4:12 PM by [Gauthier, Julie L](#) | [Category: SuperVMO](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Email this Post](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)

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