

March 28, 2025

Dr. Peter Mundschenk
President
United States Animal Health Association
4221 Mitchell Avenue
Saint Joseph, MO 64507

Re: USAHA's 2024 Resolutions 22 and 23 on Canine Brucellosis

Dear Dr. Mundschenk:

Thank you for your letter of November 24, 2024 regarding USAHA Resolutions 22¹ and 23² adopted at your 2024 Annual Meeting. We appreciate the efforts of USAHA to collaborate with key stakeholders to address current challenges in animal and public health, including those posed by canine brucellosis. We are writing with a status report regarding AVMA activities relevant to these resolutions.

On March 10, 2025, the AVMA's Council on Public Health (COPH) met virtually and included on the Council's agenda was discussion of canine brucellosis. Participants in the meeting included members of the Council and its liaison from the AVMA Board of Directors;³ representatives from multiple federal agencies, including the CDC, USDA, FDA, and DHS;⁴ state animal and public health officials;⁵ and AVMA staff.⁶ The wealth of expertise available from multiple subject matter experts informed a productive discussion.

Central to the Council's discussion were challenges faced by state animal and public health officials in providing appropriate guidance to veterinary practitioners and the public when canine brucellosis is identified in a canine patient. This includes sharing the potential risk to humans who may have been exposed and subsequent case management recommendations. These cases often attract significant public interest and what management decisions are made, as well as how these decisions are conveyed, can impact public sentiment toward veterinary community leaders. Although veterinary diagnostic laboratories offer several tests that assist veterinarians in arriving at a diagnosis for their canine patients, a validated serologic test for human serum/plasma is not currently available and this limits ability to determine risk for humans after exposure.

Epidemiologists participating in the Council's meeting agreed that *B. canis* is an important pathogen and acknowledged its multiple impacts when infections occur. However, they also pointed out that the public health burden appears to be relatively low, given that fewer than 1% of brucellosis cases in humans are associated with *B. canis*. In making this observation, it was acknowledged that lack of a validated serologic test for humans not only limits one's ability to determine risk for the humans exposed, but also limits surveillance making underreporting likely.

Despite the interest of our Council’s meeting attendees in the identification and control of canine brucellosis, those participating in the discussion agreed that attempts to engage Congress – given what appears to be limited public health impact and with multiple other high-profile issues and priorities currently in play (e.g., response to HPAI) – were unlikely to net results. Similarly, the feasibility of a comprehensive national prevalence study and epidemiologic assessment of canine brucellosis in the United States with the intent of developing a corresponding Compendium was considered low.

On a more positive note, CDC representatives shared that they have initiated efforts to develop guidelines specific to canine brucellosis, which should be helpful for state animal and public health officials. They invited those present at the meeting to assist in the identification of individuals who could serve in a reviewer capacity for those guidelines.

In discussing the development of guidelines, it was mentioned that the Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy Incident Guidelines for State Animal Health Officials may serve as a template because of its organization/layout.⁷ Additional references mentioned that could support the development of guidelines for the management of canine brucellosis included USAHA’s Public Health Implications of *B. canis* Infections in Humans⁸ and other draft and published *B. canis* reports.^{9,10}

The AVMA intends to respond to the CDC’s request to identify subject matter experts who could assist in their development of guidelines. We are pleased with comments in USAHA communications that indicate a similar desire to join such efforts and we encourage USAHA to also submit suggestions for subject matter experts to the CDC.

We thank the USAHA for the opportunity to provide our thoughts and feedback on the USAHA’s 2024 Resolutions 22 and 23. For questions regarding our comments, please contact Dr. Dharati Szymanski at 847-285-6742 or dszymanski@avma.org.

Sincerely,



Janet D. Donlin, DVM, CAE
Executive Vice President and CEO

The AVMA, founded in 1863, is one of the oldest and largest veterinary medical organizations in the world, with more than 108,000 member veterinarians engaged in a wide variety of professional activities and dedicated to the art and science of veterinary medicine.

¹ [Resolution 22 Canine Brucellosis and Human Health](#)

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), and National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians collaborate on the following:

- a) research to better understand the relationship between *Brucella canis* (*B. canis*) shedding and antibiotic treatment
- b) identification of antimicrobial treatment options and associated risk of relapse which can better inform monitoring of cases
- c) research focused on sero-positive canines and associated risks for zoonotic disease
- d) the feasibility of a comprehensive national prevalence study and epidemiologic assessment of canine brucellosis in the United States
- e) USAHA also requests the AVMA engage Congress and stakeholders on the impacts of *B. canis* on human and animal health.

² [Resolution 23 - Canine Brucellosis and Human Health](#)

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Public Health, National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, and National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials develop and publish a compendium of guidelines and recommendations for the prevention, diagnosis, management, and treatment of *Brucella canis* (*B. canis*) in people and in dogs (used for breeding as well as family pets) using a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary collaboration. Furthermore, USAHA requests the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine Board of Regents consider *B. canis* as a topic for consensus statement.

³ Representing Animal Health: Dr. Douglas Meckes, Chair, Dr. Kristin Haas, Dr. Sara McReynolds, Dr. Boyd Parr. Representing Human Health: Dr. Mariah Zeigler, Dr. Sara Margrey, Vice Chair, Dr. Karyn Bischoff, Dr. Brigid Elchos. AVMA Board of Directors Liaison: Dr. Erin Casey.

⁴ Dr. Natalie Wendling, representing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Dr. Caryn Murillo, representing CDC/Division of High Consequence Pathogens and Pathology (DHCPP)
Dr. Dawn Blackburn, representing CDC/Bacterial Special Pathogens Branch (BSPB)
Dr. Caitlin Cossaboom, representing CDC/BSPB
Dr. Rebekah Tiller, representing CDC/BSPB
Dr. Burke Healey, representing USDA – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
Dr. Sabrina Wiggins, representing USDA – Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS)
Dr. Tiffani Turinski, representing FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM)
Dr. Matt Kuhn, representing Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

⁵ Dr. Dennis Summers, representing National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO)
Dr. Beth Thompson, representing NASAHO

Dr. Mary Grace Stobierski, representing National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV)

⁶ Dr. Dharati Szymanski, Assistant Director, Division of Animal and Public Health (DAPH)

Dr. Mike Murphy, Director, DAPH

Dr. Gail Golab, Associate Executive Vice President/Chief Veterinary Officer

Ms. Anne Nichols, Administrative Assistant, Division of Animal and Public Health

⁷ https://www.usaha.org/upload/Publication/Top%20Specific/EHM_Guidance_Document_Revised_Fe.pdf

⁸ [Public Health Implications of *Brucella canis* Infections in Humans 2012](#)

⁹ <https://www.cdc.gov/brucellosis/hcp/laboratory-risks/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/brucellosis/media/pdfs/2025/02/brucellosi-reference-guide.pdf>

¹⁰ [The emergence of *Brucella canis* as a public health threat in Europe: what we know and what we need to learn](#)