

## Theme 5: Evaluation Of Animal Health Disease: Surveillance

Title: The Alberta Veterinary Practice Surveillance Network: Part 2, Veterinary Practice Surveillance

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The Veterinary Practice Surveillance program (VPS) of the Alberta Veterinary Practice Surveillance Network is an innovative approach to real time cattle disease surveillance by Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development (AAFRD). Practicing veterinarians submit cattle health and disease data directly to a VPS database through a secure web site.

A hierarchical, syndromic drop down menu system was developed to maximize information reported at the time of examination and to allow easy, accurate data entry. Syndromes are defined by: commodity (cow-calf, dairy, etc), age (categorical) and clinical syndrome (respiratory, gastrointestinal, etc). To rule in/out etiologies, veterinarians are asked questions specific to each syndrome. Clinical diagnoses are reported to provide added information and to evaluate syndrome utility. Laboratory diagnoses are reported and used to evaluate clinical diagnoses and to further evaluate syndrome utility.

Cattle owner confidentiality is maintained by locating cattle farms only to the level of the county and by storing farmer identification data in a separate, off-site database. Having two databases, one with farmer identification data and one with all other data necessitated the development of a novel software application.

VPS was designed for detecting emerging diseases, estimating geo-temporal trends in herd-level disease prevalence/incidence and estimating disease freedom probabilities. VPS is committed to collecting data to meet information needs of participating veterinarians and surveillance goals of AAFRD. This presentation will describe the VPS program, data collected and information generated from VPS surveillance, as well as innovations developed to allow the program to meet its goals.