Botryomycosis (bacterial pseudomycetoma) is an unusual type of skin infection that results from an atypical reaction to certain bacteria. The lesion has been reported in a wide variety of species from dogs, cats and horses to elephants and buffalo. Colonies of bacteria are surrounded by antigen-antibody complexes (Splendore-Hoeppli material) and pyogranulomatous inflammation which form compact “tissue grains” that are sometimes even visible as white to yellow granules. Most cases are initiated by local trauma or a foreign body. Although the pathogenesis is uncertain, it has been proposed that the lesion results from an imbalance between the organism’s virulence and the host’s response. The host is able to isolate the organism and contain the infection but is unable to eradicate it. The prognosis is usually good following surgical removal and long term antibiotic treatment. The pictures are from a recent case in the digit of a 20-year-old domestic shorthair cat. The veterinarian suspected squamous cell carcinoma.

Dr. Michelle Fleetwood
Influenza Virus Investigation in New England Seals

Last fall, increased numbers of harbor seal pups were found dead or dying along the coasts of southern Maine, New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts, with a peak in mortalities in late September/early October 2011. Between Sept 1, 2011 and April, 2012, 140 confirmed harbor seals died in this area, leading NOAA to declare a marine mammal “Unusual Mortality Event” (UME; http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/mmume/). Investigation of this UME is ongoing, including monitoring of harbor seals currently in the last stages of the 2012 pupping season. Influenza A H3N8 has been confirmed in five harbor seals from this event; two additional harbor seals from New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts have tested positive for Influenza A, but the subtype has not been confirmed. It is unclear if influenza was the primary cause of death for all the stranded seals involved in this UME (13 harbor seals have tested negative), and additional testing is ongoing. Studies are also underway to better understand the characteristics of this influenza virus and the possibility of risks to other species. A recent publication by members of the UME investigative team describes this H3N8 virus, with a genetic sequence most similar to a virus circulating in waterfowl since 2002 (http://mbio.asm.org/content/3/4/e00166-12.full.html). The paper describes mutations in binding that are known to increase transmissibility and virulence in mammals, highlighting the potential for persistence and cross-species transmission.

The investigative team is working closely with animal health experts and public health officials to ensure the health and safety of the public, pets and wildlife. The public can help by keeping themselves and their pets away from seals. Seals should not be closely approached because they are vulnerable to potential stress, injury or disease. Likewise, people and pets are vulnerable to injury or disease from seals if they get too close.

Dr. Inga Sidor

Notice of Change to Statements

The NHVDL and UNH Business Service office have been working together to create ways of streamlining the billing process. Now, the NHVDL itemized statement for services rendered is mailed with the UNH Business Services’ ‘Statement of Account’. This arrangement not only saves the laboratory postage, but allows our clients to easily compare the accrued monthly charges on their itemized statement with the ‘Statement of Account’ total(s).

In addition to changes in mailing, consideration is being given to online banking for remittance of payment. Although investigations are in the early stages, we continue to make every effort to simply the billing and payment process for our clients.

As we move forward, please remember to remit your payment to UNH and mail directly to:

University of NH Business Services
11 Garrison Avenue
Durham, NH 03824

If you should have questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us. Your phone call and feedback is always welcomed.

NHVDL Advisory Board

In June, the 4th Annual Advisory Board Meeting was held at the UNH campus. In carrying out the mission of the Board, discussion involved the reorganization and developmental goals of the laboratory as well as looking at strategies to increase revenue and decrease cost.

With significant cuts in funding, attention was given to ways in which the NHVDL could expand operations and increase revenue.

A promising new initiative is the Direct to Farmers service which has increased in caseload by 122% in 12 months. Expansion of our services (e.g., new molecular laboratory) will help offset a portion of the lab’s shortfall.

A review of the survey results confirms a need to reach out and capture those who don’t use our services. We are pleased to report that efforts are underway in marketing and establishing courier service.

The contributions of the board members have been invaluable and we will continue our work to solidify funding and to increase our client base.

Electronic Reporting

Electronic reports can now be emailed to the practice, veterinarian or both. Receiving fax as well as final paper copies in the mail is still an option. Arrangements can be made for any combination.

- Even Faster Results
- Greater Security
- No more jammed fax machines
- No more cut off or blurry text
- Less Paper!

It’s Simple and Free
Sign up Today!

603-862-2726

www.facebook.com/NHVDL

Members of the public who encounter a marine mammal that appears to be in distress should report the incident to their local marine mammal stranding network (http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/stranding/reportstranding.html) or the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional 24-hour stranding hotline (866) 755-NOAA (6622).