

California Animal Blood Banking Update

By Sean Brady, DVM, CDFA Animal Blood Banks Program Manager

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Animal Blood Banks Program implements and enforces laws related to animal blood banking in California. As a result of increased specialization in veterinary medicine, the demand for animal blood and blood component products for transfusion (such as whole blood, red blood cells, platelet-rich plasma, etc.) has risen dramatically.

Historically, California required commercial blood banks for animals to be closed-colony establishments. Closed-colony means donor animals are kept, housed, confined, or maintained for the purpose of blood collection. On January 1, 2022, Assembly Bill 1282, the California Pet Blood Bank Modernization Act, went into effect. This law aims to address the shortage of animal blood available for veterinary transfusion medicine in California and transition the State from closed-colony blood banks to community blood banks. Community blood banks are establishments that collect blood from pets whose owners voluntarily consent to have their animals donate blood. Community blood banks may be stand-alone businesses or implemented in existing veterinary practices.

Once it is determined that community blood banks have sold an amount of canine blood in California that equals or exceeds the amount commercial closed-colony blood banks sold in the previous four consecutive quarters, the CDFA will discontinue its licensing program for commercial blood banks. Additionally, the importation and sale of canine blood and blood



component products from out-of-state sources shall only be permitted from community blood banks.

Community blood banks for animals operating in California must register with the California Veterinary Medical Board to obtain a blood bank premises permit. In addition, all blood or blood component products sold in California must be registered with CDFA. Both registrations must be renewed annually. An application for registration of a blood or blood component product must include all the following:

- The name and address of the person who owns the property, establishment, institution, or business that sells the blood and blood component products
- The name and address of the person who oversees the production of animal blood and blood component products
- The type of animal blood and blood component products produced for sale
- A full description of the building,

including its address, facilities, equipment, and apparatus, to be used in production of animal blood and blood component products

- A protocol of the methods of production in detail that is followed in the production of the product
- A sample of the label to be placed on the blood or blood component product
- The registration application fee (\$500)

California licensed veterinarians who collect blood or blood component products solely for use in their own practices are exempt from registration with CDFA but must follow current and best practices on animal blood banking.

Blood banks with products registered in California are required to submit quarterly reports to CDFA that include all the following:

- The number of donations from community-sourced animals
- Separate total amounts of whole blood, red blood cells, and fresh

frozen plasma sold in California during that quarter, by species of animal, in estimated milliliters based on weight in grams

- The number and species of animal donors experiencing adverse events, the total number of adverse events, and the nature of adverse events experienced by animals that donate blood
- The number and species of animal donors that have donated blood
- The number and species of animal donors whose blood tested positive for known pathogens

Commercial blood banks for animals are not permitted to discriminate against veterinarians licensed in California in the sale of animal blood or blood component products. For instance, a commercial blood bank

that refuses to sell animal blood or blood component products to a veterinarian in circumstances in which that blood bank has available supply may be deemed to violate this aspect of the law.

To assist those interested in starting a blood bank for animals, the CDFA in conjunction with the Veterinary Medical Board, technical experts, and stakeholders have created an Animal Blood Banking Guidance Resource. This resource is designed to give veterinarians clear, accurate, and concise information regarding best management practices for operating animal blood banks and can be found at cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/cabb/docs/animal_blood_banking_guidance_resource.pdf.

This document includes information in the following areas:

- Animal donor qualification, selection, and screening
- Bloodborne pathogen testing
- Product handling, processing, labeling, and storage
- Important regulatory rules to follow

Those interested in selling animal blood or blood component products for transfusion should visit the CDFA Animal Blood Banks Program website at cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/CABB/ or email the program at CDFAbloodbanks@cdfa.ca.gov for more information. ■



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