

USDA Seeking Proposals For Production Of Bird Flu Vaccine

DAVID PITT
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture is preparing to stockpile a bird flu vaccine as the agency plans for a possible return of the virus that led to the destruction of 48 million chickens and turkeys this spring.

Wild birds' northern migration was blamed for the original spread of the H5N2 virus. And while there's no certainty the virus will reappear during southern migration this fall, the USDA plans to increase surveillance to catch any recurrence early and have hundreds of additional workers ready to euthanize infected flocks quickly as a means of avoiding the farm-to-farm spread.

But in case another outbreak gets out of hand, the government wants to acquire a stockpile of vaccines available for delivery within 24 hours, and issued a notice Tuesday that it was accepting bids from animal health companies for vaccine development.

"We want to be prepared if we get in a situation where we believe a vaccination would be a useful adjunct to our



PHOTO: METRO GRAPHICS

eradication efforts," said Dr. T.J. Myers, associate deputy administrator for veterinary services at USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

A vaccine reduces the amount of virus that chickens and turkeys produce and excrete when a flock gets infected, which helps contain the virus, Myers said. No sufficiently effective vaccine has been developed yet, though the

USDA has created a prototype seed strain. Companies may use the prototype or create their own that could be mass produced for a vaccine.

The H5N2 virus swept through turkey and egg-laying hen houses starting in March, affecting 200 farms in 15 states and costing U.S. egg and poultry exporters more than \$380 million for the first half of this year, said the Poultry & Egg Export Council. Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska were hardest hit, and producers are just now starting to restock their birds.

The USDA wants to work with companies capable of producing and storing between 100 million doses to 500 million doses.

But the decision of whether or not to use a vaccine will be made with state agencies and with serious consideration to the impact on trade, Myers said.

"Many trading partners look at vaccination as sort of throwing in the towel, that it's out of control and so they would look at that as an indication that perhaps they need to put trade restrictions on the entire country," he said. "You don't want use of the vaccine to cause more economic harm than it prevents."

Woman Robbed, Punched Inside Church

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Police said Wednesday they have arrested a suspect after a 76-year-old woman was robbed and punched in the face inside an Omaha church.

The Omaha Police Department said in a statement that 22-year-old Wayman Clark has been arrested after a felony warrant for robbery was issued. It wasn't immediately known whether he has an attorney to comment on the allegations; online court records don't yet list

the case.

The department said investigators are working to identify another male believed to have helped in the Sunday robbery that was caught on surveillance video at St. Cecilia Cathedral.

The video shows the woman reading a parish newsletter inside the church's entrance when one suspect approaches her from behind and grabs her purse before running out of the door. The other male strikes the woman in the

head, knocking her down, before leaving.

The woman, who wasn't identified, hit her head against the side of the table as she fell. She was helped by a parishioner before being taken to Creighton University Medical Center with a large bump and scrapes on her forehead. She was treated in the emergency room and has been released, a hospital spokeswoman said.

The Rev. James Netusil said he was in the sacristy

preparing for morning Mass when the assault occurred. He said the woman was "pretty shaken up" and initially didn't want to be taken to the hospital.

"From the video, we know that she had just walked in two minutes before and suddenly, she's attacked," he said.

Netusil said security cameras have been installed throughout the church and on campus for at least 10 years and the "system is exceptionally thorough."

Critic Of SD Foster Care Arrested On Old Charge

DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — Family members of a Crow Creek Sioux Tribe woman who has spoken out against South Dakota's handling of Native American children in foster care are questioning whether her arrest on a 13-year-old charge was politically motivated.

But Sara Rabern, spokeswoman for the South Dakota Attorney General's Office, said Wednesday that the arrest of 54-year-old Janice Howe, of Harrold, is simply a case of authorities finally catching up with someone who has been able to evade an old warrant.

"There's nothing politically motivated here," she said.

Howe pleaded guilty Tuesday to one felony count of perjury related to petition signatures she gathered in 1999 for a proposed constitutional amendment.

In exchange for prosecutors dropping several similar charges, Howe acknowledged improperly vouching in a notarized document that she witnessed signatures on the petition.

She was released from the Hughes County jail Wednesday afternoon pending an Oct. 6 sentencing.

Howe's husband, Louis Adrian, told the *Pierre Capital Journal* that the couple was returning from Fort Thompson to their home on the Crow Creek reservation on July 13 when they drove into a checkpoint arrest involving tribal police, U.S. marshals and Hughes County deputies.

Adrian said he believes South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley pursued the arrest because of Howe's outspokenness against the state.

Rabern said Jackley wasn't South Dakota's attorney general when the case was initiated and the

prosecutor on the case has since moved on to private practice.

Howe, a former public health nurse, was featured in a 2011 National Public Radio investigation that reported that state officials removed hundreds of Native American children each year, sometimes in questionable circumstances, while failing to place the children with their relatives or tribes. State officials at the time said that they were doing everything they could to keep families together.

Howe took on the issue while fighting to have two granddaughters returned to the family.

The Indian Child Welfare Act gives preference to American Indian families in adoptions of Indian children. Congress passed the act in 1978 after finding a high number of Indian children were removed from their homes and placed with non-Indian caretakers.

Howe's attorney, Bradley Schreiber, did not immediately return a call Wednesday seeking comment on her arrest.

Adrian said he learned that tribal officials gave permission to law enforcement agencies to make the arrest.

Roxanne Sazue, chairwoman of the Crow Creek Tribe, said she didn't have any information on the case.

The ballot initiative in question was sponsored by a libertarian group called Justice Unlimited. It would have allowed people accused of crimes to argue that certain laws have no merit and should be ignored by juries. The group pulled Howe's petitions from its filing amid doubts about their legitimacy. The measure failed.

During Tuesday's court hearing in Pierre, Howe also pleaded guilty to one count of forgery related to a 2001 check-cashing case, according to the Hughes County State's Attorney's Office.

4 Arrested In Human Trafficking Case

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Four people are in custody after law enforcement authorities carried out an investigation against a suspected prostitution operation.

The Sioux Falls Police Department says undercover investigators answered a prostitution-related online advertisement Tuesday and arranged to meet with two women. Officers then detained the women and learned they were being forced into prostitution.

Police say the individuals suspected of pimping the women were later arrested. Authorities say the charges against the 25-year-old man and 32-year-old woman include first-degree human trafficking.

During the operation, officers searched a Sioux Falls home and arrested two other people. The charges against the 28-year-old woman and 24-year-old man include possession of marijuana with intent to distribute.

The four people who were arrested are from Sioux Falls and are due in court Wednesday.

Bicyclist Fatally Injured In Collision

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A 30-year-old Lincoln man has been fatally injured in a collision between his bicycle and a minivan.

The accident occurred around 5:30 a.m. Wednesday, about a mile and a half east of Lincoln Airport. Police say the north-bound bicyclist collided with the eastbound minivan.

Police spokeswoman Katie Flood says the bicyclist was pronounced dead at a Lincoln hospital. His name isn't being released until relatives have been notified about his death. Flood identified the minivan driver as 59-year-old Ronald Orth, of Lincoln. She says he wasn't injured.

Flood says the accident is being investigated and that no citations have been issued.

Man Accused In House Fire Mentally Ill

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A judge has ruled that a Sioux Falls man was mentally ill when he set a vacant house on fire in January 2014.

Twenty-three-year-old Jeremy Larsen pleaded guilty earlier this year to reckless burning, but the plea was vacated amid questions about his mental health.

The *Argus Leader* reports that Judge Susan Sabers on Tuesday listened to testimony from four psychologists before making her ruling.

Larsen is now expected to plead guilty but mentally ill.

3.6 Quake Shook Part Of Nebraska

THEDFORD, Neb. (AP) — Authorities say a minor earthquake has shaken the Sandhills region of Nebraska.

Broken Bow radio station KCFI reports that the tremor occurred just before 2 a.m. Wednesday, and its epicenter was situated 22 miles southeast of Thedford.

The U.S. Geological Survey says the quake registered a magnitude of 3.6, which was unlikely to cause any damage.

8 Soldiers Commissioned As Lieutenants

RAPID CITY (AP) — Eight of the state's national guard soldiers have been commissioned as second lieutenants.

The South Dakota Army National Guard says the eight lieutenants recently completed officer candidate school. They took the oath of office and were commissioned during a ceremony Aug. 15 at Mount Rushmore National Park.

In order to become officers, the soldiers first had to undergo three intense phases of training.

Col. Deb Bartunek says they give soldiers the opportunity go through stressful situations so officials can evaluate their ability to act under pressure and make decisions.

The second lieutenants will now be assigned to units across the state. They will attend basic officer leader course where they will continue their training.

Many Problems Prevented By Vaccines

PIERRE — Every year, thousands of adults in the United States suffer serious health problems, are hospitalized, or even die from diseases that could have been prevented by vaccination.

To celebrate the importance of immunizations throughout life — and to help remind adults that they need vaccines too — the South Dakota Department of Health is joining with partners nationwide in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month.

"There is a misconception among many adults that vaccines are just for children," said Barbara Philips, nurse educator for the Department of Health immunization program. "The truth is, you never outgrow the need for immunizations."

The specific vaccines adults need are determined by factors such as age, lifestyle, risk conditions, locations of travel, and previous vaccines. All adults should talk to their health care providers about which vaccines are right for them.

One vaccine recommended for everyone over the age of six months is the seasonal flu vaccine.

"South Dakota has one of the highest overall flu vaccination rates in the country with well over 50 percent of adults getting vaccinated in the 2013-2014 season," said Philips. "While that's good news, there are still significant numbers of adults who don't get a flu vaccine."

Man Accused Of Robbing Grandparents Takes Deal

GERING, Neb. (AP) — A Scottsbluff man accused of robbing his grandparents is scheduled to be sentenced in October.

Online court records say 24-year-old Levi Hartman pleaded guilty Tuesday to attempted robbery. Prosecutors had reduced the charge from robbery in exchange for Hartman's plea. His sentencing date is Oct. 5.

Police say John and Marsha Hegwood were robbed at their home on May 24 by two people. Marsha Hegwood told officers that

she was sprayed with pepper spray and saw that her grandson, Hartman, was one of the two robbers. John Hegwood says the other robber knocked him down. The other robber turned out to be a 16-year-old.

The Hegwoods were taken to their basement and tied up in chairs. Their two vehicles were stolen as well as \$155 cash and two credit cards.

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SDSU To Host Soil Health Tours

BROOKINGS (AP) — The South Dakota State University Extension staff and ag experts will be hosting several soil health and cover crop field tours next month in the eastern part of the state.

Anthony Bly is an SDSU Extension soils field specialist. He says the tours provide growers with first-hand knowledge on management practices to improve soil health.

Extension staff and other industry experts will evaluate cover crops for beneficial soil health properties, as well as for forage and feed value for grazing livestock.

The tours have been scheduled for Sept. 8 in Sioux Falls; Sept. 10 in Beresford; Sept. 14 in Madison; Sept. 15 in Brookings; and Sept. 17 in Raymond.

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