

California State Veterinarian Richard Breitmeyer retires

CDFA Secretary A.G. Kawamura announced the retirement of California State Veterinarian Dr. Richard Breitmeyer after 26 years at CDFA. His retirement is effective Sept. 30, 2010.

“Dr. Breitmeyer leaves state service as one of the most respected animal health authorities in the nation,” said Secretary Kawamura. “His leadership in public policy is highly valued by governments and veterinary organizations alike. I want to thank him for his tireless commitment to public service. We owe him a monumental debt of gratitude.”

Dr. Breitmeyer joined CDFA in 1984 as a veterinary medical officer and has served as state veterinarian since 1993, under three governors. In that role, Dr. Breitmeyer served at the executive level as California’s state, national and international representative on all animal health issues affecting California and the nation, and was the principal advisor to the agriculture secretary for all food safety and animal health issues affecting California. Among Dr. Breitmeyer’s national leadership positions is a current term as president of the United States Animal Health Association.

Effective immediately, Secretary Kawamura has named Dr. Annette Whiteford to replace Dr. Breitmeyer as state veterinarian. Dr. Whiteford has been with CDFA since 2001 and has served as director of the division of Animal Health and Food Safety Services since 2004. In 2002/2003, she served as area and incident commander for California's successful fight to eradicate exotic Newcastle disease. The response involved multiple local, state and federal agencies with up-to 1,500 people on the ground at one time. Dr. Whiteford will assume the duties of state veterinarian while retaining the director position.

Dr. Whiteford received her veterinary degree in 1998 from UC Davis and spent three years in private practice before joining the Department. She also spent eight years working for business firms in the private sector before choosing to enter veterinary school.

“Dr. Whiteford has more than demonstrated that she has the talent and experience to excel as state veterinarian,” said Secretary Kawamura. “I look forward to working with her and have confidence that she will distinguish herself in the position for many years to come.”