

REPORT OF THE USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

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The Committee met on October 14, 2006 from 1:00-6:00 p.m. at the Hilton Minneapolis Hotel, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Dr. Scott LaPatra, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Randy MacMillan provided an update from the National Aquaculture Association (NAA). He first shared a review of the NAA mission, followed by discussion on viral haemorrhagic septicaemia virus (VHSV). There is concern regarding broad range of species infected by the virus with significant mortalities, and thus causing a major impact on commercial producers. NAA considers the Great Lakes strain of VHSV a foreign animal disease. MacMillan shared that NAA requests additional research into disease and species impacted by VHSV.

MacMillan next discussed the Minor Use Minor Species (MUMS) Act, providing a background and shared that NAA requests a 30-day public comment extension on the Act. Regarding the topic of antibiotic resistance/ residue, he shared that NAA attended a recent meeting with the World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). From that meeting, it was determined that aquaculture's use of antibiotics has a minor effect on the development of antibiotic resistance of human pathogens. On the National Animal ID Program, NAA has continued concern regarding the effect on the aquaculture industry. Moving ahead, NAA is taking a "watch and see" approach to see what the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is going to do.

Addressing Animal Welfare, NAA concludes that there is continued lack of scientific evidence that fish feel pain and/or suffering. NAA has provided comment to the USDA regarding OIE guidelines in order to help craft a formal US opinion to the OIE. Additionally, NAA is working to promote a positive public perception regarding the food safety, environmental sustainability of aquaculture by educating the public in a cost effective manner. MacMillan noted the NAA and American Association for the Advancement of Science Symposium in San Francisco in 2007. He added that NAA has had activity with the National Offshore Aquaculture Act (NOAA), testifying to promote/ increase effective offshore aquaculture production.

Nick Saint-Erne provided an update from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), Aquatic Vet Med Committee (AVMC). A copy of the Aquatic Veterinary Medicine Committee report from the Proceedings of the 143rd Session of the AVMA House of Delegates, Honolulu, HI, July 14, 2006, was shared. The AVMC

established a draft policy for aquatic ecosystems for the Committee on Environmental Issues (CEI). The CEI is taking the policy under review. The AVMC also helped update the AVMA's 2003 policy on Agriculture Waste Management at the request of the CEI. The AVMC recommended and the executive board approved an AVMA policy on Extra label Use of Veterinary Feed Directive Drugs for Minor Species. Additionally, the AVMC reviewed and commented on several pieces of legislation that included support for the National Offshore Aquaculture Act of 2005, the non-support for the Natural Stock Conservation Act of 2005 and the request for additional information regarding the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act of 2005.

Saint-Erne added that the AVMC reviewed the proposed Aquatic Animal Health Certificate for the export of aquatic animal and their live products. The AVMC was not in favor of the document since it would undermine USDA initiatives due to non-veterinary endorsement. The AVMC did approve continued funding for the National Aquaculture New Animal Drug Approval (NADA) Coordinator, currently Dr. Roz Schnick. The AVMA and other stakeholders identified aquatic animal antimicrobials that were identified as critical for the United States. The drugs were noted, and the list of was put forth to the OIE in Feb 2006. Saint-Erne noted that Dr. Donald Prater was nominated for the Joint FAO/WHO/OIE Expert Consultation on Antimicrobial Use in Aquaculture and Antimicrobial Resistance, which met in June 2006.

Regarding Ornamental Therapeutics, Saint-Erne told the Committee that information regarding unapproved drugs, which are being sold over the counter at pet stores, was compiled and provided to the American Pet Product Manufacturers Association. Pet Smart has since pulled antibiotic tablets and formulations that could be easily utilized for non-aquaculture species.

Other AVMA/AVMC topics included: An update on AVMC involvements on animal welfare; Online Aquatic Veterinary Resources, such as Aquvet.com and the Aqua Vet Med email newsletter, which individuals can get more information from Dr. David Scarfe; Expansion of the Journal of AVMA to include aquaculture reports; Establishment of the North American Aquatic Veterinary Association; and an update on the new USDA import inspection of carp for Spring Viremia of Carp virus.

Chair Scott LaPatra provided an update from the Fish Health Section of the Asian Fisheries Society (AFS-FHS). He shared Background regarding the organization, highlighted by the next meeting of the AFS-FHS in Jackson Hole, WY, June 2007. LaPatra informed the group that a Bluebook and standardized Inspection Manual is now available. He discussed the significant concerns, including animal welfare issues.

Jerry Heidel provided an update on the National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS). Following background information, he indicated that reporting procedures would include a confirmed diagnosis in a specific state but there would be no specific backtracking. Progress for NAHRS includes reformulating the committee. In addition, Dr. Guppy Blair has been selected to serve as liaison for the AVMA. Heidel then provided the Committee with the future goals for NAHRS:

1. Establish definitions/ concerns for aquaculture industries including:
 - a. separation of fin fish species, crustaceans and other animals, and
 - b. concerns for various US coasts.
2. Defining a producer and how to include tribal production and resource management production.

3. Defining the criteria for a definitive diagnosis of a pathogen.
4. Defining laboratory reporting criteria and ensuring laboratory involvement including private laboratory reporting.

Gary Ergie provided an update from Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Regarding the National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP), he provided the Jan. 2006 pamphlet on the NAAHP. Chapters 1-4 of the plan are currently listed on Web site and are being updated, while chapters 5-7 are in progress with a target completion date of June 2007.

Ergie updated the Committee on Spring Viremia of Carp surveillance program, indicating that 23 states are involved with the program with a total of 9,000 fish tested. Samples have been taken from farmed populations. All samples are negative via virus isolation. In the future, the program plans to expand into testing wild populations based on seroprevalence, though they are negative to date. New import regulations require live fish need to have an export health certificate confirming negative status.

Ergie provided updates on diseases of interest. The Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA) virus is garnering more attention, as it is now considered endemic in Maine. Emergency funds end in Sept. 2006; no additional funding from Congress is planned. Additional, but reduced, funding by Maine Department of Marine Resources has been allocated through 2008. A risk analysis in progress for the import and/or spread of ISA. VHSV, Great Lakes strain, is an emerging fresh water pathogen with 13 new species reported infected. Infection studies show that virus strain can infect Channel catfish and Coho by reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests, but lack clinical disease. To date, \$25,000 has been allocated to Cornell for an epidemiology study. Additionally, APHIS has published industry alerts regarding VHSV. Ergie concluded his remarks by discussing the New Export Health Certificate. Use of the form is left to the option of importing country. The Certificate is used for movement of fish out of the United States. It has been drafted so APHIS, NOAA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can use the certificate.

John Fischer provided an update of the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative. He provided a background, indicating that the national resource managers have increased dealing with disease issues. The 2005 working group has put together the principals endorsed by Fish and Wildlife agencies for a national plan, however the program is not expected to be mandated at the local/ state level. General principles include: 1.) Recognize that health management is a key component of fish and wildlife resource management; 2.) promote science based management strategies; 3.) prevention is the primary method versus control or eradication disease strategies; 4.) initiative recognizes that state fish and wildlife agencies are responsible for managing disease; 5.) must protect and support state agencies; 6.) recognize the wildlife/ domestic disease interface; 7.) recognize interstate and international coordination; and 8.) initiative must include public education regarding disease issues in wildlife and integrated prevention and management program.

The first draft of the Initiative was composed by Jan 2006, which went to Federal agencies in March 2006, then went to four regional Fish and Wildlife agencies in April, went to Non-Government Organizations (NGO) in August, and then into final revising after Sept. Overarching goals of the program are to: 1.) build capacity in state fish and wildlife management agencies regarding health issues via developing processes,

training people, and building support via communication between agencies, stakeholders, public and policy makers; and 2.) minimize negative impacts by preventing introduction, early detection and rapid response.

David Morris, Cooperative Services, Research, Extension, and Education Services (CSREES), USDA, provided an update from the National Animal ID Program. He shared an overview of the goals of the program and current status of the terrestrial program. The current status of the aquaculture NAID Program is that the program is voluntary with no contingencies. Premises identification would be the major component of the program. David went on to explain the swine/ sheep programs, which are developing "lot" programs. The difference between the tracking program and the tracing program were described and it was shown how data from the two would be expected to interface.

David Gollon provided background of live game fish/ bait fish production and live hauling from a producers standpoint. The extensive interstate movement of fish was highlighted. Concerns expressed included client confidentiality, interstate testing and control of the VHSV Great Lakes strain, and reliable/ stringent testing protocols.

Following the presentations, Chair Scott LaPatra conducted new business. This included four resolutions for discussion, all of which were passed by the Committee and forwarded to the Committee on Nominations and Resolutions.