

## **UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2006**

**RESOLUTION NUMBER: 35 APPROVED**

**SOURCE:** COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AND EMERGING DISEASES

**SUBJECT MATTER:** COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO  
COMBAT DISEASE

**DATES:** MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, OCTOBER 12-18, 2006

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The ever growing and diverse nature of government, non-government, and international organizations operating in the international theater with regard to foreign and emerging diseases, the challenge to coordinate and/or collaborate in planning, development and delivery of direct technical assistance as well as capacity building efforts continues to be of concern to the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA).

### **RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), and Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS), United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and United States Health and Human Services (USHHS), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to actively pursue the means and avenues to develop and establish visible and sustainable collaborative efforts in the international search for foreign and emerging diseases, including those diseases of zoonotic importance.

### **RESPONSE:**

#### **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)**

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) currently is working collaboratively with other Federal Agencies to ensure that foreign and emerging animal diseases, including those with zoonotic potential, present a minimal risk to animal and human health. Although each Federal agency operates under a different mandate, the current framework has been responsive to national animal and human health events.

USDA is continuing to work at strengthening its collaboration with international public health and animal health officials to safeguard the United States from animal and human disease threats. Our agencies serve as World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Collaborating Centers, working alongside other national and international

agencies such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which became an OIE Collaborating Center for Emerging and Reemerging Zoonoses this year. This allows the CDC to provide their competence and expertise internationally on foreign and emerging disease issues.

In July 2006, USDA joined the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in launching a new crisis management center to enhance worldwide response to animal disease. The Crisis Management Center, located in Rome, Italy, and run by the FAO in close collaboration with the OIE, uses international resources to prevent and contain dangerous animal diseases.

### **Department Of Homeland Security (DHS), Customs and Border Protection (CBP)**

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has integrated its agricultural border activities into its primary charge of preventing terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the US, including prevention of agro/bio-terrorism. Agricultural inspections have traditionally focused on unintentional introduction of pests or diseases. CBP actively prevents the introduction of harmful exotic plant and animal pests and diseases. CBP also seeks to prevent the intentional introduction of harmful organisms, or Agro-terrorism, to protect our agricultural resources and the food supply. The role of the CBP Agriculture Specialists at ports of entry is crucial.

CBP formed an Agro-bio terrorism countermeasures subgroup to place an emphasis on critical preparation and planning for prevention and countermeasures. Agriculture Programs and Liaison (APL) has developed a CBP agro-bio terrorism strategy and countermeasures action plan and coordinating further development with the CBP Office of Policy and Planning. APL has made contacts and provided key experts for DHS Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection working groups.

CBP worked with partners to researched risk, science, technology, and other government agencies plans and to develop operational procedures at ports of entry to address the threat of an avian influenza pandemic. CBP participated in an inter-agency agro-terrorism exercise and are working cooperatively with USDA to plan joint test exercises for future dates

CBP has provided oversight to the field to mitigate risk and safeguard potential agro threats such as the Mediterranean fruit fly outbreak in Mexico, smuggled exotic hatching eggs and fresh Asian poultry that could carry exotic avian diseases, Exotic New Castle Disease (END), Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), infested/diseased fruits, vegetables, plants, and prohibited meat products in commercial shipments and passenger baggage at all of US ports of entry.

CBPAS has increased efforts to look for containers and trucks with smuggled agricultural products and/or prohibited packaging materials. These shipments could also contain harmful pest, pathogens, or invasive species that could harm our agriculture and environment.

CBP has initiated joint special operations and “blitzes” with USDA based on trend analysis data. CBP utilizes analysis to develop targeting information and focus inspections on high risk products and pathways. This allows us to utilize our resources effectively to protect United States agriculture.

CBP has established interagency working groups, called Port Pest Risk Committees, to identify and discuss high risk pathways, assist with development of special initiatives and operations to target prohibited agricultural products, evaluate procedures, and share information. They also help identify plant pest training initiatives. The committees consist of CBP and USDA managers and specialists, APHIS and state veterinarians, identifiers, investigators, State Plant Regulatory Officers, and other government entities (county). All field office and major ports have active committees. Other related state entities, such as USAHA are welcome to contact, and or join, these groups.

### National Biosurveillance Integration System

The DHS led National Biosurveillance Integration System (NBIS) is being established to provide early recognition and enhanced situational awareness of biological hazards of potential national significance. The NBIS Vision is to provide a global integrated biosurveillance common operating picture (BCOP) to partner organizations and agencies. In order to achieve this vision, NBIS recognizes the need to develop cooperative relationships with international organizations working in the areas of human, plant, animal, and environmental health. Zoonotic diseases are one of four initial NBIS focus areas. As an integrator of surveillance products across domains, the inherent multi-domain nature of zoonotic diseases makes them especially relevant to NBIS. A second focus area is highly contagious foreign animal disease. NBIS is committed to improving the biosurveillance community’s situational awareness and early recognition of emerging infectious disease and will be pursuing increased interaction with relevant international organizations.

DHS OHA is the lead for the DHS planning for Pandemic Influenza and High Path Avian Influenza. DHS OHA continues to work closely with the Department of State and Department of Agriculture in plans for and international prevention strategies per the National Pandemic Influenza Implementation Plan.

### **Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

The CDC strongly supports the need for collaboration in the area of international research, surveillance and outbreak response to emerging, re-emerging diseases particularly those that are zoonotic among federal agencies (HHS-CDC; USDA-APHIS-VS-FSIS-FAS; DHS). In an effort to accomplish this goal several measures are in place; CDC is working closely with USDA to develop combined outbreak response teams to be deployed internationally should an outbreak of a zoonotic nature occur, this effort will be done under the CDC OIE Collaborating Center; CDC and USDA have entered into

discussions regarding combined training of veterinary personnel for zoonotic diseases, CDC and USDA are discussing the use of CDC Epidemic Intelligence Officers for a combined project on a selected zoonotic disease to design a surveillance system to be used internationally, which has the potential to become a template for other zoonotic diseases.