

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2009 RESOLUTION

OCTOBER 14, 2009, SAN DIEGO, CA

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 46 **APPROVED**

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND RABIES

SUBJECT MATTER: STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AGAINST WILDLIFE RABIES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The use of a licensed oral rabies vaccine, RABORAL V-RG® (Merial) has been effective in controlling rabies in certain wildlife rabies reservoir species. Strategic application of RABORAL V-RG eliminated domestic dog/coyote (DDC) rabies variant from the United States (US). However endemicity of this variant in Mexico has necessitated ongoing enhanced surveillance and maintenance of a barrier of vaccinated coyotes along the Texas/Mexico border to prevent reincursion of DDC rabies variant in the US. This vaccine has been effective in the eastern United States to control raccoon rabies variant and gray fox rabies variant in southwest Texas. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources also continues control programs with the ultimate goal of elimination of arctic fox rabies in western Ontario and raccoon rabies variant in Quebec along the Vermont border utilizing a new human adenovirus recombinant desoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) oral rabies vaccine, ONRAB® (Artemis) and a new bait with great success. This vaccine shows good effectiveness in fox, raccoon and skunk. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Thomas Jefferson University continue captive wildlife studies on a new canine adenovirus (DNA) rabies glycoprotein vaccine with good success and expect field trials to be conducted in 2010. This cooperative and collaborative work continues through the partners of the North American Rabies Management Plan (NARMP) which include the United States, Canada, Mexico, Navajo Nation, state and local government agencies, private industry and academia who continue to study and plan the management, control and elimination of terrestrial rabies in North America. Current large scale projects to mitigate the adverse impact of raccoon rabies on the U.S. eastern seaboard, gray fox rabies in Texas, and domestic dog/coyote rabies on the Texas Mexico border. Current studies include the preliminary research in the control of the new bat rabies variant in skunks and gray fox in the Flagstaff, Arizona region; skunk variant rabies in the western United States; feral dog studies in the Navajo (Tribal) Nation. Data from barrier projects and rabies control associated studies inform strategic planning to assure efficient and effective utilization of resources. Appropriate funding for these projects and studies is paramount if the control and elimination of these terrestrial rabies variants in North America is to be realized.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) encourages the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) and the United States Department of Human and Health Services (USDHHS), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/National Center for Zoonotic and Vector Borne Enteric Diseases to request funding and resources and that Congress appropriate funding to cooperate and collaborate with their partners in the North American Rabies Management Plan (NARMP) team to study and compare the effectiveness of these three vaccines and baits in field trials to enhance the effectiveness of control and elimination of rabies in these coordinated regional wildlife rabies control and vaccination programs.

RESPONSE:

USDA-APHIS-WS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS), agrees with USAHA Resolution Number 46, *Strategic Initiatives against Wildlife Rabies (SIAWR)*, on the importance of conducting field trials to evaluate prospective oral rabies vaccines and baits that could demonstrate improved performance and enhance our ability to more aggressively meet National and North American rabies management goals. WS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), State and other cooperators made a serious commitment toward the elimination of canine rabies beginning in the mid-1990's, with success achieved in September 2007 when the United States was declared canine rabies free under World Health Organization (WHO) standards.

USDA, APHIS, WS recognizes the need for new or improved oral rabies vaccines and baits to more aggressively achieve rabies management goals. In 2009, WS and cooperators in New Brunswick, Canada participated in a field vaccine comparison between Raboral V-RG (Merial, Athens, GA) used in the United States and ONRAB (Artemis Industries, Guelph, ON, CA), a human adenovirus-rabies recombinant vaccine recently applied under experimental licensing in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, Canada. The results of that study indicated a two-fold increase in seroconversion in raccoons with ONRAB. These favorable results have demonstrated a need to conduct a similar follow-up comparative vaccine study in 2010. Also, APHIS has established a fiscal year 2010 operational goal to conduct collaborative field trials to test new or improved baits or vaccines. The process has begun and prospective field sites are under consideration. Environmental assessment and regulatory compliance steps are being initiated. New baits and vaccines or improvements to the current licensed vaccine that demonstrate enhanced field performance in raccoons and field efficacy in skunks will be considered as candidates for operational use once the requisite regulatory steps have been satisfactorily completed. WS will continue to evaluate these new vaccines as current resources allow.