

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2009 RESOLUTION

OCTOBER 14, 2009, SAN DIEGO, CA

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 28 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON TRANSMISSIBLE DISEASES OF
POULTRY AND OTHER AVIAN SPECIES

SUBJECT MATTER: COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT FUNDING FOR
NOTIFIABLE AVIAN INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided funds for states to establish notifiable avian influenza surveillance in multiple avian compartments. State animal health organizations have been successful in implementing surveillance programs for their resident avian populations, some of which had previously lacked organized disease surveillance.

The success of the surveillance partnership effort is evidenced by the elimination of H7N2 avian influenza from the northeast live bird market system. Additionally, recent introductions of H7N9 avian influenza into commercial poultry flocks in four states have been successfully managed to reduce the impact on the marketability of United States (US) poultry due to early detection and rapid response by states whose capabilities have been strengthened by federal notifiable avian influenza cooperative agreement surveillance funding.

The risks to the US poultry industry remain as prevalent and challenging as when the surveillance programs were first initiated. The ongoing potential for virus introduction by wild birds into a growing backyard mixed species flocks along with spread of the urban chicken phenomena, increases in alternative housing for smaller commercial poultry enterprises and confirmed notifiable avian influenza reports from fourteen other countries continues to pose an eminent threat to the US commercial poultry industry. This ongoing threat is best addressed through federally supported surveillance for notifiable avian influenza.

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) to maintain adequate funding and risk based allocation to states to fully support the national notifiable avian influenza domestic poultry program. Further, the USAHA urges Congress to continue to appropriate these monies to USDA-APHIS-VS for the notifiable avian influenza program.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association. The Voluntary H5/H7 Low Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (LPAI) Prevention and Control Program was initiated in fiscal year (FY) 2004 following serious outbreaks of LPAI H7N2 in Pennsylvania (1996 through 1998) and in Virginia (2002) and the recognition of the increased risk of introduction and spread of avian diseases, notably avian influenza, by movement of poultry into the live bird marketing system (LBMS) in the Northeastern States. The 2002 LPAI H7N2 Virginia outbreak was associated with interstate transport of domestic poultry to live bird markets and resulted in the depopulation of approximately 4.7 million birds and losses to the Virginia poultry industry of approximately \$140 million.

The H5/H7 LPAI program includes prevention and control activities in the commercial poultry industry administered through the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPPI) and the LBMS administered through VS poultry program staff. This is a voluntary program supported through APHIS cooperative agreements with participating States. In FY 2009, 42 States participated in the NPPI commercial poultry component, 28 States in the upland game bird component, and 41 States in the LBMS component of the program.

The ongoing efforts of VS and the participating States have identified and eliminated H5/H7 LPAI infections in commercial poultry flocks and also have resulted in a marked decline in the incidence of H5/H7 LPAI viruses in the LBMS, particularly in New Jersey and New York. In FY 2009, there were only four cases of live bird markets positive for LPAI (H5) in New York. The program did not receive any reports of positive LBMS sectors from other participating States.

Securing funding to support the H5/H7 LPAI Program is an ongoing process. From FY 2006 to FY 2008, the Program received LPAI yearly budget allocations averaging \$14.0 million. Approximately \$7.0 million in additional HPAI 'supplemental' funding also has been allocated in the yearly budget to enhance surveillance in higher risk areas such as birds raised outdoors (backyard flocks, animal auctions, upland game birds, etc). In FY 2009, these LPAI and HPAI funds were consolidated to a notifiable avian influenza (NAI) budget line item to better integrate and maintain adequate funding and risk-based allocation to participating States for NAI surveillance, prevention, and control activities.

APHIS will continue to request additional and sufficient funds to maintain and support the H5/H7 NAI Program. The final amount of appropriated funding is at the discretion of the U.S. Congress.