

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2005

RESOLUTION: 29 APPROVED
SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON WILDLIFE DISEASES
SUBJECT MATTER: NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE HEALTH INITIATIVE
DATES: Hershey, Pennsylvania – November 3-9, 2005

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The importance of maintaining healthy populations has long been recognized by fish and wildlife managers and several disease issues are of growing concern to natural resource, animal health and public health professionals and the publics they serve. Significant diseases, such as plague, hemorrhagic disease, pasteurellosis, chronic wasting disease (CWD), botulism, West Nile virus, whirling disease, and others have been found in wild and farmed fish or wildlife populations in North America and can have a significant impact on resources. Reservoirs of economically important diseases like bovine brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis have inadvertently become established in native wildlife and threaten livestock industries in some areas of the United States. Foreign animal diseases, such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), which was eradicated decades ago, and highly pathogenic avian influenza, which never has been reported in North American wildlife, also are of concern. The intentional or accidental introduction of these diseases could significantly impact wildlife, domestic animal, or human populations and would require a coordinated multi-agency response.

State fish and wildlife agencies are the principal front-line managers of fish and wildlife resources for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of its citizens, and collectively, the nation. As the principal managers of fish and wildlife resources, state fish and wildlife agencies have primary authority and responsibility for managing free-ranging wildlife, including diseases, and this authority extends to most federal lands. In view of the increasing need for fish and wildlife managers to effectively address disease issues, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA), in cooperation with appropriate governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations, including the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA), is undertaking the development of a National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to protect the health of fish and wildlife resources, as well as the health of domestic animals and humans, in the United States and eventually, in cooperation with Canada and Mexico, throughout North America.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) fully supports the development and implementation of a National Fish and Wildlife Health Plan by an inclusive working group of appropriate governmental and non-governmental organizations under the leadership of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA). Furthermore, USAHA urges the United States Congress to provide adequate and sustained funding for development and implementation of the plan by state fish and wildlife agencies through additional appropriations specifically for this purpose to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) Department of Homeland Security (DHS), United States Department of Interior (USDI) and others.

RESPONSE:

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has forwarded a copy of Resolution 29 to our Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition and our Center for Veterinary Medicine for their consideration. Also, FDA agrees with you that Resolution 29 may also fall under the purview of the United States Department of Agriculture and United States Department of Interior.