



# USAHA News Release

United States Animal Health Association

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## **USAHA/National Assembly Member participates in FMD review of Colombia, South America**

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RICHMOND, VA – United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) past president and National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO) member Rick Willer recently returned from a two-week long review of a portion of Colombia, South America. The review was part of a process to assess the risk of allowing the importation of beef into the United States. Willer, who currently serves as the Arizona State Veterinarian, represented the NASAHO on a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) team looking at Foot-and-Mouth disease (FMD) controls within and around a “meat trading zone” located in the northern part of the country.

The five-member team, led by Dr. Silvia Kreindel of the USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), spent two full weeks visiting a number of sites, including livestock auctions, beef packing plants, movement control posts, international border inspection stations, and small and large cattle farms, to obtain a preliminary assessment on the risk to the U.S. livestock industry should beef be approved for export. While Willer and the team indicate that the Colombian FMD program has many strengths, a number of issues were identified that may pose risk to the U.S. If these potential risks can be mitigated adequately, APHIS will complete a risk assessment. Once completed, the risk assessment will be used by APHIS as its foundation for making decisions on what import restrictions are necessary. The results of the assessment will be released publicly for comment before APHIS implements any regulatory changes.

For at least the past six years, USDA, APHIS leadership has invited a state veterinarian representative to participate in all foreign animal health reviews to ensure the inclusion of the perspective of a state animal health official in the review and risk assessment process. Recent reviews have been conducted in such countries as Argentina, Uruguay, Canada, Mexico, Great Britain and a number of European Union countries for several diseases including Classical Swine Fever, Foot and Mouth disease, Exotic Newcastle disease and Tuberculosis.

For more information about the animal importation and the risk assessment process, see: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/animals/animal\\_import/animal\\_imports.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/animal_import/animal_imports.shtml).