



USAHA News Release

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For immediate release:

COMMITTEE CALLS FOR NEW NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR JOHNE'S DISEASE

Reno, Nev., Oct. 22, 2007 - The U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA) Committee on Johne's Disease at its meeting here this week called for an ad hoc subcommittee to be formed to initiate and spearhead the development of a new and comprehensive strategic plan to guide the future of Johne's disease control and management efforts in the United States.

This subcommittee would present an initial draft of such a strategic plan at a meeting of the National Johne's Working Group (NJWG) during the annual meeting of the National Institute of Animal Agriculture in April 2008. A final draft would be presented to the USAHA Committee on Johne's Disease at its 2008 annual meeting in Greensboro, N.C., in October.

Committee members noted that Johne's disease control, management and research efforts have had a long and progressive history in the United States. A number of agencies, institutions, organizations and industry groups have been involved in these efforts, largely through the coordination and direction of the NJWG of the USAHA Committee on Johne's Disease.

In 2001, the NJWG developed a strategic plan to guide its efforts and those of the USAHA Committee on Johne's Disease through 2008. Since the development of that plan, significant changes have occurred in such things as the understanding of Johne's disease and its management; the availability of diagnostic testing; state and federal funding; and the awareness of Johne's disease by cattle producers. Recent erosions in federal funding have raised additional concerns about the future of the program.

The committee said that the strategic planning effort should involve representatives from all pertinent groups, including the cattle industry, private veterinary practitioners, academia, government and allied industry.

Results from the NAHMS Dairy 2007 regarding producer knowledge about the Johne's disease were also presented. About 90 percent of dairy producers knew basic information about the disease and more than 55 percent were knowledgeable. More than 30 percent had implemented some form of John's disease control. Review of management practices confirms that producers are doing a better job of controlling the disease. With more than half of all dairy operations infected, control of Johne's disease becomes even more critical.

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