UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
2016 Resolution
120th Annual Meeting
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RESOLUTION NUMBER: **6, 13, 29, 34, and 42 Combined** **APPROVED**

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES OF CATTLE, BISON AND CAMELIDS**
COMMITTEE ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES OF HORSES
COMMITTEE ON CAPTIVE WILDLIFE AND ALTERNATIVE LIVESTOCK
COMMITTEE ON TRANSMISSIBLE DISEASES OF POULTRY AND OTHER AVIAN SPECIES
COMMITTEE ON SHEEP AND GOATS

SUBJECT MATTER: **Laboratory Approval for Regulatory Diseases**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Laboratories performing animal surveillance testing are integral to establishing the health status of the national herds and flocks as well as individual animals destined for export. Currently, the United States Department of Agriculture has no authority to restrict laboratories from conducting foreign animal disease diagnostic testing on livestock and poultry samples. For example, one private laboratory in the United States is advertising Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing for all of the following Foreign Animal diseases African swine fever, African horse sickness, avian influenza, classical swine fever, foot and mouth disease, nipah virus, newcastle disease virus, pestes des petits ruminants virus, rinderpest, rift valley fever, contagious equine metritis, glanders, piroplasmosis, and surra.

Additionally, there is limited state authority or oversight over laboratories conducting diagnostic testing for diseases of regulatory importance on samples obtained from livestock and poultry. The same laboratory conducting the above listed foreign animal disease tests offers PCR tests for equine infectious anemia, brucellosis, infectious bursal disease, influenza, Johnes disease, pseudorabies, Q fever, rabies, West Nile Virus and vesicular stomatitis. Other private laboratories are promoting new diagnostic testing modalities for diseases of regulatory importance such as chronic wasting disease.

There is no requirement that the tests offered by unregulated laboratories are approved and validated to accurately assess infection status, nor are there requirements that tests offered by unregulated laboratories conform to national regulatory testing requirements. Diagnostic tests, especially PCR, are difficult to perform and a small deviation from standards could potentially result in a false positive or false negative test result. The practitioner or producers are likely not aware of these difficulties in performing the test or the potential regulatory ramifications of a false test result reported to state animal health

officials. Ultimately, the inability to prescribe laboratory testing standards necessary for ensuring the health of livestock and poultry, places animal agriculture in the United States at significant risk.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services to restrict foreign animal disease diagnostic testing to laboratories approved by the USDA and to take regulatory enforcement action against non-approved laboratories conducting testing for foreign animal diseases. If USDA doesn't currently have authority for these actions, USAHA urges USDA to take measures to establish those authorities.

Additionally, the USAHA recommends state animal health officials assess state authority or oversight over laboratories conducting diagnostic testing for diseases of regulatory importance on samples obtained from livestock and poultry.