

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2006

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 1 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

SUBJECT MATTER: INTERIM EMERGENCY REGULATION

DATES: MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, OCTOBER 12-18, 2006

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) has historically been considered to be the most serious viral disease of salmonids reared in freshwater environments in Europe. More recently, VHS has been associated with marine finfish species, and most recently has become an emerging disease of freshwater fish in the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada.

Viral hemorrhagic septicemia was first detected in the Great Lakes region in the Bay of Quinte, Lake Ontario, in 2005, and was subsequently detected in an archived 2003 sample from Lake St. Clair. Viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus also was detected in Lake St. Clair in 2005 and in Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake St. Clare and the St. Lawrence River in 2006 in a variety of fish species. Prior to 2003, isolations of VHS virus were limited in North America to saltwater finfish from the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, including Chinook and Coho salmon, Pacific herring, Atlantic herring and cod. Since 2005, the list of species known to be affected by VHS has risen to more than 40, including a number of ecologically and recreationally important fish.

Because of the threat of this emerging disease, regulations should be put in place immediately to minimize potential risks and prevent impacts on aquaculture fish species in the United States.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) develop and implement an interim emergency regulation to prevent the movement of viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) virus from positive to negative areas.

RESPONSE:

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection

Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the United States Animal Health Association's concerns and appreciates the opportunity to respond. On October 24, 2006, USDA-APHIS issued a Federal Order that prohibited the movement of live fish susceptible to viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) from Ontario and Quebec, Canada, and the movement of these species out of the eight States bordering the Great Lakes. Based on comments received and discussion with stakeholders, APHIS amended the Order on November 14.

VS held a series of public meetings in early January with stakeholders in all regions of the country and is currently working to replace the Federal Order with regulations that would provide specific conditions under which VHS-susceptible species could be imported into the United States or moved interstate.