

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2005

RESOLUTION: 10 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK

DATES: Hershey, Pennsylvania – November 3-9, 2005

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) is part of a national strategy to coordinate the nation's federal, state and university laboratory resources to allow authorities to better respond to any type of animal health emergency, including bioterrorist events, newly emerging diseases, and foreign animal disease (FAD) agents that threaten the nation's food supply and public health.

In fiscal year 2002, 12 state and university diagnostic laboratories were selected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to receive Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grants to initiate the network. In order to ensure that the NAHLN is fully capable of responding to any animal health emergency, funding will be required for appropriate facilities, training and equipment.

USDA-APHIS-VS and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) have established a collaborative relationship to produce, distribute and use proficiency panels and reference materials in order to harmonize the diagnosis of major animal diseases between the United States and Canada.

This initiative is separate from, but integrates with and supports, the Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act (VWEA, S. 914, H.R. 2206) by providing training opportunities for veterinarians in public health practice.

It is essential that annual appropriations be provided for the full implementation, maintenance and long-term support of the NAHLN.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests the House Agriculture and the Senate Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees to immediately provide \$90 million to fully fund the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) infrastructure.

USAHA urges the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Animal and Plant Health Inspections Service (USDA), (APHIS) and Veterinary Services (VS) to request line-item funding in the USDA budget in the amount of \$35 million per year for ongoing support of the NAHLN and to ensure that adequate funding is available for transfer and full implementation of newly developed and validated assays from federal and other laboratories to the NAHLN laboratories.

RESPONSE:

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE, VETERINARY SERVICES (APHIS-VS)

The National Veterinary Services Laboratories recently revised their Strategic Plan and has included an objective to strengthen the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN). This will

build a system for surveillance and maximum emergency response capabilities. Action items were developed for each of objective and assigned priorities. One of the action items identified as a high priority, is to explore methods to more clearly identify NAHLN funding and make NAHLN a separate line item. A team has been formed to carry out the action item and personnel from the animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Veterinary Services have participated in discussions concerning the development of a line item for NAHLN.