

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION – 2006

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 17 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND
VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: REQUESTING AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE
RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADVICE ON THE PROPOSED
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY NATIONAL
BIO AND AGRO-DEFENSE FACILITY

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

BACKGORUND INFORMATION:

The American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) representing the nation's 28 Colleges of Veterinary Medicine, 8 Veterinary Science Departments and 8 Comparative Medicine Departments that are involved in teaching, research and service for the United States have a large stake in the outcome of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). As the primary educators for the veterinary profession, member institutions are responsible for the education of 10,000 veterinary students and the postgraduate training of the research and future public service veterinary workforce for the United States. The AAVMC along with many national stakeholders endorse the proposed NBAF.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) strongly urges the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to provide an opportunity for stakeholder organizations, such as the USAHA, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC), and the various commodity organizations, to present meaningful recommendations and advice concerning the mission and goals of the new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). In addition, the goals for NBAF should include establishing collaborative relationships for research and training of the future national veterinary workforce to meet the needs of national security.

RESPONSE:

Department Of Homeland Security (DHS),Science and Technology Directorate

The Department of Homeland Security is pleased to provide a response concerning the development of the National Bio and Agro Defense Facility. The proposed National Bio and Agro-defense Facility (NBAF) will enable DHS to fulfill its mission of detecting,

preventing, protecting against and responding to bioterrorist attacks within the United States. The process to develop NBAF is a multi-phase, multi-year effort that involves site selection, environmental assessment, planning, design, construction, and commissioning. The NBAF project brings together several cooperating agencies with mission critical objectives in an effort to share resources in a state of the art building designed and built to facilitate integration and collaboration.

The Science and Technology Directorate's, Office of National Labs is leading a team of researchers, scientists, technicians, and other skilled professionals from various agencies in the specifics of facility development. While future management and resource allocation planning are being handled at the highest levels of DHS and its collaborating agencies, the NBAF project management team remains committed to providing an open, inclusive, and iterative process that considers the input of all interested stakeholders during every phase of the project.

The NBAF project management team will oversee the entire development process. All program and technical requirements, budgetary planning, resource allocation planning and coordination, schedule tracking, and status reporting will be managed by these team leaders with necessary agency input at the most senior levels. The NBAF project management team will manage the development and posting of public information to stakeholders throughout the project and specifically for the small number of sites that will be selected for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) development. The Notice of Intent (NOI) will be the vehicle to notify interested parties and the public of the selected sites.

Copies of the NOI will be posted in the Federal Register and will announce the selection of sites for which an EIS will be performed. Postcards will be mailed to stakeholders announcing public scoping meetings, and other significant milestone events affording the opportunity for meaningful input for all sites where an EIS will be conducted.

Following the scoping meetings, stakeholders can continue to monitor and provide input to the design and development of the NBAF and associated activities via the NBAF website (www.dhs.gov/nbaf). Stakeholders are encouraged to engage the program manager to provide input, assessments, and commentary of a technical or programmatic nature that will assist the government in developing a program that properly engages the varied and combined missions of the agencies involved in the NBAF project.