

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 18 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND
VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: FUNDING FOR THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH
INSPECTION SERVICE, WILDLIFE SERVICES,
NATIONAL WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER'S NEW
BIOSAFETY LEVEL-3 AGRICULTURE (BSL-3AG)
WILDLIFE DISEASE RESEARCH LABORATORY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Because of the important impact wildlife diseases have on human and domestic animal health, it is critical to ensure there is adequate laboratory space to address national wildlife disease problems. The construction and operation of a Biosafety Level-3 Agriculture (BSL-3Ag) laboratory at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC), Fort Collins, Colorado will enhance the nation's ability to address significant wildlife disease issues. In support of the construction of the NWRC BSL-3Ag facility, the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) passed Resolution 8 during its 2005 Annual Meeting. In support of the operation and maintenance of the facility USAHA passed Resolution 32 during its 2007 Annual Meeting. A delay for construction of the facility occurred in the spring of 2008 due to an inability to come to terms with the developer and negotiations were cancelled. Currently, a renewed effort to secure a developer is under negotiation. The 30 percent design phase of the NWRC Wildlife Disease Research Building (WDRB) is complete and solicitation for offerers for development and construction is underway. Functional operation of the facility is scheduled for fall 2011. This Resolution reaffirms USAHA support for the staffing and operation of a 70,000 square foot BSL-3Ag laboratory at the NWRC, Fort Collins, Colorado.

The NWRC has unique capabilities to address research, surveillance, diagnostics and disease control efforts in wildlife. These programs are the first line of defense against catastrophic and newly emerging animal diseases, some of which are transmissible to humans. An essential component of an increased capacity for addressing these disease programs is the construction of a BSL-3Ag research laboratory and wildlife disease diagnostic and research facility at the NWRC. This facility will support expanding research, methods development, and operational efforts to better understand and combat emerging and invasive wildlife diseases.

During the past 24 months USDA-APHIS-WS has played a critical role in efforts for first detection for Asian subtypes of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Through the WS operational program over 150,000 wild bird samples and 75,000 environmental samples were collected in collaboration with 50 state agencies. The wild bird samples were analyzed under stringent requirements laid out in the Interagency Strategic Plan by multiple laboratories in the National Animal Laboratory Health Network (NAHLN) in multiple states. The environmental samples were analyzed at the NWRC. While the HPAI screening was conducted under BSL-2 conditions, the effort and capacity of the NWRC for surge wildlife disease diagnostics were demonstrated.

Construction and operation of the WDRB will enhance USDA's ability to meet the challenges imposed by newly and re-emerging wildlife disease and to comply with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 9 (HSPD9), the USDA Strategic Plan and the APHIS Strategic Plan by providing APHIS with BSL-3 laboratory and BSL-3Ag wildlife holding/testing facilities in support of: 1) enhancement of operational capacity of federal BSL-3 laboratory diagnostic surge capacity; 2) development of laboratory diagnostic methods for wildlife pathogens and diseases impacting domestic animal and human health; 3) development of field sampling and diagnostic methods to support surveillance and monitoring activities for wildlife pathogens and diseases within and across United States borders; 4) development and efficacy evaluation of methods to prevent/control/contain (e.g. vaccines) wildlife diseases; 5) determination of wildlife host range and reservoir potential for pathogens of program importance toward development of wildlife disease risk assessment models relating to animal and human health and farm biosecurity; 6) development of methods for the protection of animal and public health and protection of the food supply; and 7) directed efforts toward methods development for foreign animal diseases.

The NWRC laboratory will be utilized to conduct research on zoonotic wildlife diseases that affect wild and domestic animals, and that may impact human health. The facility will be instrumental in development of methods to identify, monitor, control, eradicate and prevent the introduction of wildlife diseases into the United States and the North American continent. The BSL-3 laboratory environments will provide for support and surge capacity for other APHIS surveillance activities for domestic and foreign animal diseases during times of emergency.

A fully staffed facility will be able to respond to outbreaks of wildlife diseases and catastrophic emergencies. In addition, the facility could provide emergency surge capacity to the NAHLN.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Secretary of Agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS), and the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriation committees to secure funding for the staffing and operation of a 70,000 square foot Biosafety Level 3-Agriculture (BSL-3Ag) laboratory at the National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC), Fort Collins, Colorado at an estimated annual cost of \$3.5 million so that research and methods development on wildlife diseases that are transmissible to humans and domestic animals can be conducted.

RESPONSE:

USDA-APHIS, Wildlife Services

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) agrees and is committed to support USAHA Resolution 18, *Funding for the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services, National Wildlife Research Center's New Biosafety Level-3 Agriculture (BSL-3AG) Wildlife Disease Research Laboratory*. We recognize the importance of increased Biosafety Level 3 facilities to conduct wildlife research and carry out critical wildlife disease diagnostics in support of biosafety to humans, domestic animals, and wildlife. Previously, WS supported the 2007 USAHA Resolution Number 32 (*Support for Staffing and Operation of the National Wildlife Services Research Center's New Biosafety Level-3 Agriculture Wildlife Disease Research Laboratory*) as part of the APHIS, WS National Wildlife Research Center's (NWRC) Master Plan on the campus of Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. This facility is scheduled to be constructed under a private construct/USDA lease arrangement through General Services Administration. APHIS continues to support both resolutions for this important, unique wildlife disease research facility as part of fulfilling APHIS' mission of strengthening emergency response preparedness and safeguarding American agriculture.