

## UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2007

**RESOLUTION NUMBER: 32      APPROVED**

**SOURCE:** COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND  
VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**SUBJECT MATTER:** SUPPORT FOR STAFFING AND OPERATION OF THE  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER'S NEW  
BIOSAFETY LEVEL-3 AGRICULTURE WILDLIFE DISEASE  
RESEARCH LABORATORY

**DATES:** RENO, NEVADA, OCTOBER 18 – 24, 2007

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

It is critical to ensure there is adequate laboratory space to address national wildlife disease problems because of the important impact wildlife diseases have on human and domestic animal health. The construction and operation of a Biosafety Level-3 Agriculture (BSL-3 Ag) 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-3 Ag facility, the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) passed Resolution 8 at its 2005 meeting in Hershey, Pennsylvania. The 30% design phase of the NWRC Wildlife Disease Building (WDB) is complete and "Solicitation for Offerers" for development and construction is underway. Functional operation of the facility is scheduled for spring 2010. This resolution supports efforts for the staffing and operation of a 70,000 square foot Biosafety Level 3-Agriculture 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-3 Ag 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 18 months USDA, 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 75,000 wild bird samples and 50,000 environmental samples were collected in collaboration with 50 state agencies. The 75,000 wild bird samples were analyzed at a number of different laboratory facilities under stringent requirements laid out in the Interagency Strategic Plan by the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN). The 50,000 environmental samples were all 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 WDB 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 (HSPD) 9, the USDA Strategic Plan and the APHIS Strategic Plan by providing APHIS with Biosafety Level-3 (BSL-3) laboratory and Biosafety Level-3(Ag) 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; (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 National Animal Health Laboratory Network.

## **RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS), the Secretary of Agriculture, and the House and Senate Subcommittees on Agriculture Appropriations secure funding for the staffing and operation of the 70,000 square foot Biosafety Level 3-Agriculture laboratory at the National Wildlife Research Center, Fort Collins, Colorado, at an estimated annual cost of \$3,500,000.

## **RESPONSE**

### **USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services**

USDA, APHIS, WS agrees and is committed to support USAHA Resolution Number 32, *Support for Staffing and Operation of the National Wildlife Research Center's New Biosafety Level-3 Agriculture Wildlife Disease Research Laboratory*. We recognize the importance of increased Biosafety Level 3 facilities to both conduct wildlife research and carry out critical wildlife disease diagnostics in support of biosafety to humans, domestic animals and wildlife. Previously, we have supported the 2005 USAHA Resolution Number 8 (*A New Biosafety Level 3-AG (BSL-3-AG) Wildlife Disease Research*

*Laboratory at the National Wildlife Research Center*) 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.