

## **REPORT OF THE USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE**

Co-Chairs: Dr. Scott E. LaPatra, Buhl, ID  
Dr. Thomas J. Baldwin, Logan, UT

Dr. Deborah L. Brennan, MS; Dr. Gary L. Brickler, WA; Dr. Jones W. Bryan, SC; Dr. William W. Buisch, NC; Dr. John A. Caver, SC; Dr. Robert G. Ehlenfeldt, WI; Dr. Najam Q. Faizi, VA; Dr. James M. Foppoli, HI; Dr. Anthony M. Gallina, FL; Dr. Joe S. Gloyd, DE; Mr. Robert E. Good, FL; Dr. Larry M. Granger, MD; Dr. Christopher H. Hannafin, RI; Dr. Robert M. Harbison, AR; Dr. Scott R. Haskell, CA; Dr. Burke L. Healey, OK; Dr. Donald E. Hoenig, ME; Dr. Robert F. Kahrs, FL; Dr. Vader M. Loomis, PA; Mr. Larry D. Mark, VA; Mr. Daniel P. Marsh, MI; Dr. Robert B. Miller, VA; Dr. Charles Palmer, CA; Mr. Richard P. Peterson, CA; Dr. H. Graham Purchase, DE; Dr. John P. Sanders, Jr., WV; Dr. A. David Scarfe, IL; Dr. Roy A. Schultz, IA; Dr. Sang J. Shin, NY; Dr. Scott R. Syska, MO; Dr. Lewis P. Thomas, NV; Dr. Peter H. Timm, CA; Dr. Norman G. Willis, CAN; Ms. Ria de Grassi, CA.

Co-chair Scott LaPatra opened the Committee meeting at 12:30 pm. Attendees were welcomed and asked to introduce themselves.

Betsy Hart provided an update from the National Aquaculture Association (NAA), a producer organization. The diverse nature of the membership was emphasized, including representation of all aquacultured species. The NAA provides a unified voice for aquaculture, helping to assure the vitality of the various aquaculture industries. NAA committees represent various components of aquaculture, and through their governing board, assure a united stand on issues. The NAA offers a strong informational web site. Current issues facing organized aquaculture were reviewed, including the National Animal Identification Program and environmental issues.

Dr. Valerie Ragan, Associate Deputy Administrator United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) provided an update on the National Animal Identification Program (NAIP). NAIP is being developed for disease eradication, and is applicable to any disease and all livestock. They are currently assessing applicability to aquaculture and how to best implement an effective program; i.e. the program needs to be tailored to the animals in question. An aquaculture industry working group has been formed that is working with USDA-APHIS-VS on an acceptable plan for the use of the NAIP in the aquaculture arena.

USDA-APHIS-VS Deputy Administrator Dr. John Clifford and Dr. Jill Rolland, USDA-APHIS-VS gave an update from USDA-APHIS. USDA has found it important to work closely with the aquaculture in-

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dustry in establishing programs and protocols related to aquatic animal diseases that could threaten the aquatic industry. The National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP) is being developed, which is a guidance document, with three federal agencies involved: Commerce, Interior, and USDA. A partnership of these agencies with industry and professional representatives has been created to develop a transparent plan based upon consensus. They presented a summary of the NAAHP as well as an update on the response to recent outbreaks of infectious salmon anemia (ISA), spring viremia of carp (SVC), and white spot disease of shrimp. European Union-generated directives related to export of fish, fish products, and mollusks to the EU were reviewed. These presentations generated lively audience discussion related to USDA interactions with and impact upon producer groups and aquaculture-related commerce.

David Scarfe presented an update from American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Aquatic Veterinary Medicine Committee (AVMC). The background and activities of the AVMA-AVMC, formerly known as the Aquaculture and Seafood Advisory Committee, were presented. The AVMC has addressed a wide variety of topics related to aquatic animal health, regulatory issues, and environmental concerns. These include national aquatic animal health programs, diagnostics, therapeutic agents, effluents, seafood safety, and promotion of the important role of veterinarians in the aquaculture industry.

Dr. Bob Kahrs discussed the Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience. The Whitney Laboratory in St. Augustine, Florida is affiliated with the University of Florida and developing a program in marine animal health that includes development of a Center for Marine Animal Health. Training and funding are available for graduate students and post-doctorates. Attendees were urged to contact the laboratory director for more information.

Co-chair Scott LaPatra gave an update from the Fish Health Section (FHS) of the American Fisheries Society (AFS). The AFS-FHS has continued its active involvement in fish health issues at all levels. The organization provides expertise to a variety of stakeholders, both public and private, in the aquaculture industries. The FHS provides professional certification, continuing education and regional and national meetings. They have recently developed a Standard Inspection Manual in collaboration with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service that is reviewed annually and has been provided to the National Aquatic Animal Health Taskforce.

Dr. Victoria Bridges discussed "Forecasting Disease Emergence in the Aquaculture Industry."

A presentation from the USDA-APHIS-VS Center for Emerging Issues summarized their overall activities related to analysis of emerging animal diseases, surveillance systems for emerging animal health

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events, and tracking and trending of health events. A current project is focused on forecasting disease in the aquaculture industry. The goal is to develop a “disease emergence profile” for the food fish industry. This includes describing characteristics of disease emergence factors through analysis of current situations and the forces for change. Predictive, decision-making tools are the anticipated result of this work.

Committee resolutions from the 2003 Annual Meeting were reviewed and discussed, including their fate and USDA’s response.

Dr. Stan Bruntz presented a request on behalf of the Committee on Animal Health Information Systems with respect to the National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS). This group is requesting appointment of a chair for the Aquaculture group. A motion was passed to appoint Jerry Heidel as the chair of the NAHRS Aquaculture Commodity Working Group and to have him contact existing members to assess their willingness in continuing their membership. In the absence of such willingness, the vacant positions will be filled with appropriate members.

The Committee discussed three proposed resolutions. Two were approved by the Committee and submitted to the Committee on Nominations and Resolutions for approval by the general membership.

The Committee discussed a proposed resolution on the listing of the paramyxean protozoan parasite *Marteilioides chungmuensis*, known to infect oyster species including the Pacific oyster, *Crassostrea gigas*, and the Iwagake oyster, *Crassostrea nippona*, and possibly other bivalve species, as a Notifiable Disease in the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) International Aquatic Animal Health Code. The subject was introduced by Jerry Heidel on behalf of Ralph Elston and the Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association. After discussion, the proposed resolution was not approved. It was suggested that Dr. Elston directly contact Dr. Jill Rolland, USDA-APHIS, with a request for USDA-APHIS to consider listing of this parasitic disease. This would initiate a thorough review of the condition to determine if there is sufficient data to support this listing. Additionally, Dr. Elston should seek further producer support for diverse geographical areas of the United States. This proposed resolution was not approved.

A resolution introduced by Maine State Veterinarian Dr. Don Hoenig was approved. It requested USDA-APHIS to begin to work immediately to establish sufficient, annual funding for the long-term maintenance of the USDA-APHIS-VS program for ISA including indemnification for loss incurred by U.S. salmonid growers in the implementation of the program.

A resolution introduced by co-chair Scott LaPatra was also approved. It requested USDA-APHIS-VS determine if the data needed to perform credible risk assessments exists, to identify information gaps, and to fill in those gaps for the prevention of the introduction and the potential establishment of viruses of finfish of economic significance into the US commercial farmed fish industry sectors.