

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2007

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 76 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON BRUCELLOSIS

SUBJECT MATTER: BRUCELLOSIS LABORATORY CONSOLIDATION

DATE: RENO, NEVADA, OCTOBER 18 – 24, 2007

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

During the committee meeting, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) presented an overview of proposed laboratory consolidation as part of a suite of adjustments to national brucellosis surveillance to reflect declining budgetary resources, reduce redundancy, and improve program efficiency.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to expedite the consolidation of brucellosis testing laboratories, moving toward a system of regional laboratories. USDA-APHIS-VS should consider the following as the move to laboratory consolidation is made: 1) establish 12 regional brucellosis laboratories; 2) eliminate USDA funding for 17 laboratories and transfer their samples to regional laboratories; 3) maintain funding for 7 state laboratories that do not serve as regional laboratories; 4) any of the 17 labs that lose USDA funding may decide to continue operating will need to seek alternate funding or charge user fees; 5) include approval of all brucellosis laboratories based on national standards; and 6) those national standards include, but are not limited to, ensuring that state animal health officials receive information on numbers of samples performed on animals that originate from that state, but are slaughtered in packing plants and tested in laboratories in other states, standards for turnaround time, rapid communication of test results, and standardization of tests performed.

RESPONSE:

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) concurs with the recommendations made by the USAHA Committee on Brucellosis and appreciates the opportunity to respond. VS is continuing to develop and implement plans to consolidate brucellosis testing laboratories and standardize tests used for brucellosis surveillance. The number of laboratories and appropriate funding will be determined by an assessment of multiple factors, including the number of samples to be tested, cost per test, shipping costs, and protocols for

data management and timely reporting of test results. VS will continue to collaborate with States to refine appropriate laboratory selection and funding criteria and to develop and execute implementation and communication plans that ensure an effective and efficient brucellosis surveillance testing program.