

REPORT OF THE USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Co-Chair: Dr. Bennie I. Osburn, Davis, CA

Co-Chair: Mr. Robert E. Frost, Lincoln, CA

Dr. J. Lee Alley, AL; Dr. Alex A. Ardans, CA; Dr. Thomas W. Bates, CA; Dr. Judith Bossé, CAN; Dr. John R. Clifford, DC; Dr. W. Ron DeHaven, DC; Dr. Brian R. Evans, CAN; Dr. Peter J. Fernandez, DC; Dr. Bret D. Marsh, IN; Ms. Barbara M. Martin, IA; Dr. Richard H. McCapes, CA; Dr. Donald O'Toole, WY; Dr. Gary D. Osweiler, IA; Col. Gerald Parker, DC; Dr. Willie M. Reed, MI; Dr. Alfonso Torres, NY; Dr. Lyle P. Vogel, IL; Dr. Richard D. Willer, AZ; Dr. José Angel del Valle Molina, MEX.

The Committee met on Monday, October 25, 2004, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. There were 24 people in attendance. Co-chairs Dr. Bennie Osburn and Mr. Bob Frost welcomed Committee members and guests to the inaugural meeting of the Committee and all were given an opportunity to introduce themselves.

There were no formal presentations made during the Committee meeting.

The Committee discussed funding for National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN). Barbara Martin, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), NAHLN Coordinator reported that 43 laboratories in 37 states are currently participating in the NAHLN, but only 12 laboratories are funded as part of the initial pilot project. Willie Reed, AAVLD President reported that a one-time appropriation of \$85 million is needed to fully fund the NAHLN and \$30 million per year is needed to provide ongoing maintenance and support.

The concept of a North American Laboratory Network was then discussed. Dr. Brian Evans, Chief Veterinary Officer for Canada, discussed the status of diagnostic animal health programs in Canada and stated the need for interagency and cross-jurisdictional cooperation to provide a hemispheric response to global threats to animal health. Dr. Jose Angel del Valle, Chief Veterinary Officer for Mexico, discussed the status of animal health programs in Mexico and stated a strong desire to work with the U.S. and Canadian diagnostic laboratories to improve standardization and quality control. Dr. John Clifford, USDA-APHIS-VS Deputy Administrator, reported that USDA-APHIS is working with Canada and Mexico on a number of issues and expressed a commitment to continue the emergency response coordination. Co-chair Bob Frost stated a need to develop a North American Laboratory Network to improve harmonization and standardization among the diagnostic

USAHA/AAVLD REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

laboratories. The Committee expressed consensus to support the concept of a North American Laboratory Network and a commitment to increase collaboration among the diagnostic laboratories.

The Committee then discussed building capacity in veterinary medical education. Co-chair Dr. Bennie Osburn reported that a number of studies have demonstrated critical shortages of veterinarians in public practice areas, including public health, regulatory veterinary medicine, biomedical research and academia. Drs. Willie Reed and Donal O'Toole stated there was a shortage of veterinarians pursuing post-DVM training in pathology and toxicology and severe competition with private industry in recruiting board-certified diagnosticians to work in state and federal diagnostic laboratories. Dr. Evans stated a need to increase the number of veterinary pathologists and link the diagnostic laboratory infrastructure with expertise in the veterinary medical colleges. Dr. Osburn reported that the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) was working to have new legislation introduced in Congress to authorize a program of competitive grants for the veterinary medical colleges to build capacity and increase the number of veterinary students. The Committee approved a recommendation that United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) support and join the AAVMC in seeking federal funding to build capacity in veterinary public health, public practice and biomedical research.

As a result of the discussion on the NAHLN, the Committee approved a resolution to request federal funding for NAHLN. The resolution was forwarded to the Committee on Nominations and Resolutions for approval by the general membership.