

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 19 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND
VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY READINESS FOR
ARTHROPOD-BORNE DISEASES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The inability of the United States (US) to detect the introduction of West Nile virus and control the spread of the disease across the nation has highlighted the lack of US veterinary workforce readiness for arthropod-borne diseases. The recent outbreaks of bluetongue virus in Europe and Rift Valley fever virus in Africa further support the need for veterinary capacity in the diagnosis, control and epidemiology of arthropod-borne diseases. Development of diagnostic and control strategies, and regulatory statutes to reduce the economic impact on US livestock requires an interdisciplinary approach including entomology, microbiology, immunology, veterinary medicine and epidemiology.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) develop an interagency strategy and coordination for development of diagnostic and control strategies for arthropod-borne animal diseases, support either development or maintenance of the necessary high bio-containment laboratories and large animal isolation facilities and provide opportunities for training of National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratories and veterinarians as to the clinical presentations and detection of high threat arthropod-borne diseases.

RESPONSE:

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services recognizes the United States Animal Health Association's concerns. USDA supports interagency coordination in the development of strategies to address arthropod-borne animal diseases, which includes facility needs, training, and education.

APHIS addresses many of the issues in this resolution in its role as the primary agency for agriculture and natural resources under Emergency Support Function (ESF) #11 of the National Response Framework. APHIS plays a significant role in a wide variety of emergency incidents,

including “all hazards” emergencies (i.e., those unrelated to outbreaks of pests and diseases threatening agricultural production).

One of the primary functions of ESF #11 is the response to animal diseases, including implementing an integrated Federal, State, Tribal, and local response to an outbreak of a highly contagious or economically devastating animal/zoonotic disease. ESF #11 ensures, in coordination with ESF #8 (Public Health and Medical Services), that animal/veterinary issues in natural disasters are supported. Additional information on ESF #11 can be found online at www.aphis.usda.gov/emergency_response/downloads/hazard/ESF11.pdf.

USDA participates in several interagency coordination efforts for arthropod-borne diseases:

- Collaborations with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on ArboNET for reporting of equine cases of arboviral diseases,
- Interagency Working Group for the Coordination of Zoonotic Disease Surveillance (includes APHIS, CDC, Food and Drug Administration, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Wildlife Health Center, Southeastern Wildlife Research Center, National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials, and National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians)
- Interagency Rift Valley Fever (RVF) Working Group (includes APHIS, Agricultural Research Service, CDC, and universities).

The APHIS National Veterinary Stockpile supported the RVF Countermeasures Working Group, which included international experts as well as experts from multiple government entities, to review and make recommendations regarding current vaccines, diagnostics, and vector control.

Finally, APHIS has developed the Foreign Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Plan. An appendix for RVF is in development.