

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION – 2007

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 31 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND
VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: NATIONAL VETERINARY MEDICAL SERVICES ACT (PL
108-161)

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National Veterinary Medical Services Act (NVMSA) is a student loan repayment program for veterinarians who practice in underserved areas. This loan repayment program is to be administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Secretary of Agriculture can determine veterinary shortage areas in rural practice, urban practice, federal government agencies, and discipline areas. Recently highlighted awareness of bioterrorism and foreign animal disease threats to public health and food safety has heightened the urgency of a fully funded and implemented program. The NVMSA also creates a reserve corps of veterinarians available for mobilization in the event of an animal disease emergency or disaster. Adequate funding for NVMSA is \$20 million annually.

Enacted in December 2003 and appropriated for both FY06 and FY07, NVMSA's rules remain unwritten by USDA, rendering the program non-functional. The Administration has not included funding for NVMSA in the President's budget, prioritize its rule-making process, or attempt to develop NVMSA's reserve emergency veterinary corps component.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Congress fully fund the National Veterinary Medical Services Act (NVMSA) for \$20 million in the FY08 Agriculture Appropriations bill and requests that the administration budget NVMSA for \$20 million in FY09.

USAHA requests the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) promulgate the regulations for NVMSA no later than 270 days after adoption of this resolution. USAHA recommends that the first phase of NVMSA's implementation should prioritize shortages of large and mixed animal practitioners in rural communities and training of veterinary

laboratorians because of urgent national security concerns for public health, bioterrorism preparedness, and food supply security.