

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 2 and 35 Combined APPROVED

SOURCE: USAHA /AAVLD COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AND EMERGING DISEASES

SUBJECT MATTER: REGIONAL AND OPERATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

There is a significant need to expand federal funding for state animal health agencies to proactively work with state emergency management agencies and other existing regional agriculture emergency management groups. This much needed funding will be utilized to regionalize animal health emergency management preparedness and response capabilities and to demonstrate effectiveness of regional operation plans that will coordinate and integrate both the public and private sectors to prevent, respond and recover from any major foreign animal disease(s) which may threaten the public health and/or the health and safety of the United States livestock population. This important undertaking will be done in concert with recommendations contained in Homeland Security Presidential Directives 5, 7, 8 and most importantly 9.

Much has been accomplished since September 11, 2001 to focus attention at the local, state and national levels to better prepare the nation to address potential acts of terrorism. However, the food and agricultural community (both public and private sectors) remain unprepared to effectively prevent, respond and recover from major animal health emergencies that could result from the introduction of one or more foreign animal diseases at different locations throughout the nation. To be better prepared to address such worse-case scenarios, there is a critical need to operationalize emergency preparedness and response capabilities at the regional level so that both the public and private sectors are coordinated and fully integrated into such planning as called for in Homeland Security Presidential Directive 9. This represents a critical national security need to protect the food chain, public health and the environment in the event of a major animal health related emergency. Through regionalization or compartmentalization of the nation, a more rigorous and effective animal health emergency management system can be developed and quickly implemented to prevent the spread of disease agents and better manage foreign animal disease related threats which will know no state boundaries. Such regional animal health emergency management planning will provide greater assurance for critical coordination between both the public and private sectors as well as better coordination within the public sector between federal agencies, state animal health agencies, state emergency management agencies, state and federally funded diagnostic laboratories and state and local extension agents.

Resolution:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Homeland Security (USDHS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to each request \$5 million within the President's 2011 budget to adequately fund an initiative to engage state animal health agencies to work cooperatively at the regional level to establish or expand existing regional animal health emergency management planning groups. The goal of this initiative is to form food and agriculture Regional Emergency Management Alliances (REMA's) for the purpose of developing Regional Emergency Management Operations Plans (REOPs) to implement the provisions in Homeland Security Presidential Directive 9 (HSPD9). Such funding should encourage regional demonstration projects to develop REMA's and implement REOPs which meet the specific need to operationalize the provisions outlined in HSPD9 and provide the capability to quickly regionalize or compartmentalize the nation against a potential introduction of a highly transmissible and contagious foreign animal disease.

USDHS and USDA-APHIS-VS also are urged to assist state animal health agencies and state emergency management agencies in actively supporting REMAs and REOPs to operationalize effective animal health emergency management planning at the regional level in both the public and private sectors, so as to better protect the nation's food supply and public health. Such planning should develop coordinated policy and implementation of:

- Vaccination procedures;
- Euthanasia and carcass disposal procedures;
- Milk and disinfection waste disposal protocols;
- Risk assessments of public health, industry and regulatory perspectives;
- Prevention education efforts and risk communications;
- Command, control and emergency management operations;
- Recovery management;
- Continuity of business planning;
- Community-based emergency planning—local, state and regional partnerships and participation encouraged; and
- Credentialing of veterinarians between states within each region.

RESPONSE:

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services appreciates the United States Animal Health Association's interest in emergency planning. APHIS supports the establishment or expansion of existing regional animal health emergency management planning groups. As budgets are tightened, however, fewer resources may be available for both existing priorities and new initiatives. Leveraging regional planning initiatives that are already federally funded is a viable alternative to requesting additional funding.

For example, as a member of the Government Coordinating Council and lead of the Food and Agriculture Sector Coordinating Council, APHIS favors the formation of the Regional Consortium Coordinating Council (RCCC) by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The RCCC is the DHS' forum for regional coordination to enhance protection, response, recovery, and resilience of the Nation's critical infrastructure.

In addition, the animal emergency management community has an active test exercise schedule for emergency managers, responders, and other stakeholders to train and practice prevention, protection, response, and recovery capabilities in a realistic environment. APHIS will conduct a multi-State exercise in 2009 and is planning a national exercise for 2010.

Finally, APHIS has also worked with egg industry representatives, university officials, and State animal health officials to develop a continuity-of-business plan for egg industry facilities in a control zone (quarantine zone). The goal of this initiative is to provide an integrated and synchronized system to implement movement and permit activities for egg production facilities located in a control zone during a highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak. APHIS is also beginning a similar preparedness and planning process for foot-and-mouth disease.

APHIS is committed to continuing its work with States to strengthen infrastructure in the area of emergency response. The Agency recognizes that a State and Federal partnership is critical to an effective response during an animal health emergency.