

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Chairman: Richard E. Breitmeyer, Sacramento, CA

Vice Chairman: Steven L. Halstead, Lansing, MI

Bruce L. Akey, NY; Donald E. Hansen, OR; William L. Hartmann, MN; Donald E. Hoenig, ME; Susan J. Keller, ND; James W. Leafstedt, SD; David T. Marshall, NC; Lee M. Myers, GA; Nancy J. Robinson, MO; Joe Starcher, WV, Sam Holland, SD.

Committee Members Present: Richard E. Breitmeyer, CA; Steven L. Halstead, Lansing, MI; Dr. Bruce L. Akey, NY; Dr. Donald E. Hoenig, ME; Mr. James W. Leafstedt, SD; Dr. David T. Marshall, NC; Dr. Lee M. Myers, GA; Dr. Sam Holland, SD.

American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) Participants: Barbara Powers, CO; David Steffen, NE; Gary Anderson, KS; Sharon Hietala, CA; Steve Hooser, IN.

Committee Chair Participants: Glenn Plumb, WY; Francois Elvinger, VA; John Fischer, GA; Andy Schwartz, TX, Daniel Lafontaine, SC, Marilyn Simunich, ID.

On Tuesday, the Committee met first with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC), at the AVMA Government Relations Division offices. Dr. Ron DeHaven, Executive Vice President of the AVMA, first addressed and commended the great partnerships that existed among AVMA, AAVMC, USAHA, and AAVLD in very challenging times of transition and necessary expansion. The veterinary profession is at a crossroads: its public workforce and activities (public practice, public health) need to be expanded, production animal veterinary medicine needs to be supported to ensure the health of the national livestock herd, poultry flock and aquatic animal populations, with still high demands of companion animal private practice.

AVMA is supporting five strategic priorities which are animal welfare, animal workforce, veterinary education, veterinary economics, and advocacy. In particular regarding animal welfare, AVMA is committed to balanced, science based representation of all relevant viewpoints, and currently faces a challenge from an emergent, single focused Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association.

Dr. DeHaven briefly explained the functions of the Communications, Convention and Meeting Planning, Education, Government Relations, and Science divisions of AVMA; in particular its outreach and communications work which raises awareness for the challenges that the profession faces and the needs for a strong professional body; the integration of human, animal and environmental health into the One Health concept; AVMA's role in education not only of veterinarians, but of veterinary technicians as well; and its overarching function of bringing professionals together at the yearly AVMA meeting, and at leadership conferences.

Dr. DeHaven initiated a discussion on AVMA's work influencing U.S. legislature for the benefit of animal health and welfare and the profession in general.

Dr. Mark Lutschaunig, AVMA Director of the Government Relations Division, provided details on current legislative initiatives. He addressed the needs for support of the pending Veterinary Public Health Workforce Expansion Act (VPHWEA) and for appropriations and implementation of the National Veterinary Medical Service Act. The Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD) in particular is threatened if permanent multi-year funding cannot be assured and may cease to operate mid-to-late 2008, and the reauthorization of the 2003 Animal Drug User Fee Act (ADUFA) may lead to language changes that could result in restrictions on antibiotic use in food animals.

Dr. Michael Chaddock, Deputy Executive Director of the AAVMC, presented the charge and structure of the AAVMC, whose members include all U.S. and Canadian, as well as several European and Australian veterinary colleges, and veterinary science and comparative medicine departments across the U.S. Dr. Marguerite Pappaioanou recently joined the organization as its new Executive Director. Mr. Brian Smith, Director of AAVMC Government Affairs further elaborated on the VPHWEA, which currently has 91 co-sponsors on Capitol Hill.

The Committee next met with the Animal Ag Coalition (AAC), as part of their regular monthly meeting. Following introductions, including those on teleconference, the AAC proceeded with updates from AAC members.

Reports included the Coalition for Food and Agriculture Research (C-FAR) and the Food and Agriculture Sector Coordinating Council (FASCC). AAC Chairman Paul Rodgers indicated DHS would be presenting the Food and Ag Sector Strategic Vision at the next meeting. Barb Powers provided an update on the National Animal Health Laboratories review, highlighting the interest of AAVLD to gather input from industry stakeholders.

The AAC next reviewed appropriation activities, indicating that AAC members should forward requests to chairman for consideration. It was noted that USDA, Agriculture Research Service (ARS) and USDA, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension (CSREES) has taken a \$238 million decrease. Also presented was a proposal to continue levels of support for Centers of Excellence at Texas A&M and the University of Minnesota.

The Committee next gathered an update on other legislative and regulatory activities, including the Farm Bill, concerns regarding the cafeteria vendor used in the House of Representatives, and the ongoing need for funding FARAD. The AAC is also addressing a recent draft standards from the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) on defining sustainable agriculture.

Discussion continued on the National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility, and the relationship/future of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center. Representative John Dingell has approached the AAC for input regarding this. AAC is considering developing a white paper on this issue to outline the roles of PIADC and the NBAF for the future.

On Tuesday afternoon, the Committee met with Food and Drug Administration, (FDA), Center for Veterinary Medicine [Bruce] representative, Dr. Neal Bataller, Director, Division of Compliance

Bataller first addressed bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). A new regulation will be published soon to restrict certain Bovine materials (not just the current Specified Risk Materials) from all animal feeds. Based on field inspections, there is a high rate of compliance with the current rule (compliance violations were at zero for the last round of inspections). They are working with the transportation industry to ensure the prevention of cross-contamination of feedstuffs during hauling. The FDA doesn't regulate environmental issues, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does, so environmental contamination and disposal issues are not within their purview. FDA doesn't know what will happen with the increased amount of condemned material, hoping a new industry will develop to make use of it? The new rule will be published as a Final Rule with a defined implementation time line of several months.

He then addressed pet food regulation. The melamine contamination last year illustrated that FDA-CVM doesn't have the staff needed to cover such emergencies and needs to partner with other groups to handle these. This outbreak showed there was a gap in laboratory coverage for feed toxicology. A new National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) Toxicology Working Group was formed as a result and will focus on building infrastructure starting by identifying potential funding streams. FDA-CVM is currently giving extra attention to the use of distiller's grains and byproducts from biofuels plants that may be used for feed ingredients. The Food Safety and Import Amendments Act of 2007 requires the codifying of feed ingredients, use of Good Manufacturing Practices by feed manufacturers and new labeling requirements for pet food.

Bataller next mentioned the cloning risk assessment. A risk assessment has been published and some 30,000 were received in response to that publication that must be answered.

National Antibiotic Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS) was the next subject. The program was reviewed in 2007 by the FDA Science Board and a 10 year strategic plan created that will include the support of hypotheses-driven research in that area.

Regarding Minor Use Minor Species (MUMS) drugs, there are several new drugs in the pipeline for consideration for a MUMS designation, including drugs for wildlife.

Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks (ICLN) comprises the Food Emergency Response Network (FERN), Laboratory Response Network (LRN), National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN) and the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) whose goals are to work cooperatively to optimize national laboratory preparedness and provide mutual support wherever possible, consistent with applicable authorities and funding restrictions.

The Committee concluded the day with an update from the Food and Agriculture Sector of the Government Coordinating Council (GCC), including representatives Leann Jackson, FDA, and Jessica Fantinato USDA.

HSPD7 calls for Critical Infrastructure Identification, prioritization and protection: Two key activities are the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) and Sector Specific Plans (SSP). The NIPP is available at [www.dhs.gov/nipp](http://www.dhs.gov/nipp). All critical sectors had to develop SSPs that describe how federal, state, tribal, local and industry groups will work together to protect its infrastructure. The sector of most interest to us is the Food and Agriculture sector which began in 2006 and organized a GCC and Sector Specified Council (SSC). The GCC includes representatives from USDA, DHS, FDA, USAHA, AAVLD, among many others. There are monthly conference calls and quarterly meetings.

One activity of the GCC was the formation of a joint research committee to identify industry and state research and development needs as regards to detection, decontamination and disposal of threat agents. A white paper is being developed to request assistance/resources from DHS National Center for Food Protection and Defense.

The GCC and SCC also have annual tabletop exercises. In 2006 in Raleigh, NC, the topic was contamination of bottled water; in 2007 in Washington, DC, the topic was a FMD outbreak; in 2007 in Harrisburg, the topic was an animal feed contamination; in 2008, a late response and recovery issue is planned. To-date, these tabletops have identified issues with communications among agencies, federal to state, and to the private sector and public. Other issues identified include lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities of federal and state agencies, roles of different laboratory networks, lack of business continuity planning; confusion of funding authorities and lack of economic recovery plans. Strengths include good cooperation among agencies, existence of expertise, good informal communications, and good state level response plans.

Another effort underway is the criticality tool development to identify the critical components of the Food and Agriculture Sector. This is called the FASCAT (Food and Agriculture Sector Criticality Assessment Tool). Version 1 of FASCAT was released to a few groups, reviewed and refined to Version 2. Version 2 of the FASCAT was recently released, and information is being gathered, starting with a targeted state plan to be expanded nationally.

A final development is the HSIN (Homeland Security Information Network), a web-based network that has been developed that has extensive information on innumerable items of interest to the Food and Agriculture Sector. Two Webinars on the use of the HSIN have been given. Metrics need to be developed to determine its overall success.

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On Wednesday, Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Scott Hurd and Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) Administrator Al Almanza met with the group beginning at 8:30 a.m. in the Jamie L. Whitten Building.

The first topic of discussion was welfare issues relating to the California/Hallmark investigation, which is ongoing. Preliminary comments indicate a need for more random review on-site and possible use of cameras, in addition to on-site inspectors. FSIS is currently evaluating how much more staffing is needed (different/additional staffing options), initial focus on audit of plants supplying schools and those slaughtering high risk animals. Decisions are pending completion of current review. An evaluation including what could have been done differently as well as new approaches and solutions. FSIS expects to have the review complete, a plan, and initiatives to present in the next 60 to 90 days. The key message is that industry will need to be self-regulating, with regulators setting boundaries.

As discussion continued USAHA shared comments, which are summarized as follows.

The need to place limitations on "shades of grey" exemptions for downer cows. Better definition needed of downer for discrimination from acute injury (e.g. obvious acute injury vs. more subjective and marginal cows).

Potential for introducing producers to a HACCP-type process?

The need for more presence in the plants day-to-day (current limitations with inspectors primarily tied-up/focused on the postmortem line). Ante-mortem is as important as post-mortem, inspector presence should be continuous.

FSIS incentives to producers for not waiting until the cull cow is downer/difficult to assess.

Comfortable that on-site veterinarians can determine acute injury (e.g. broken leg), but marginal animals are area of concern.

FSIS using the unfortunate situation as an opportunity to change the current process.

Plant had record of 17 external and 15 internal audits, emphasizing that cannot rely on existing audit process alone, need for more FSIS staffing.

A second topic focused on the increase in *E.coli* 0157. A meeting is scheduled for April 9, and an American Meat Institute meeting has been held and they will bring forth from that meeting the bigger issues. *E.coli* 0157 numbers reported as of March 11, were half of December 2007. The decline was not linked to seasonal differences e.g. cold weather or feed. The industry is looking at different ways of addressing *E.coli*, noting difficulty in interpreting due to normal biologic variation. The past increase reported may not be a true increase in prevalence. FSIS does not anticipate this to be a sustained problem. The same level of testing is ongoing, however FSIS has been using a different methodology since January 2007, using a different media. These changes in media are published on web site for reference. Industry reported before media change they were already seeing an increase in 0157. FSIS' new media is much more sensitive than previously, moving in 2008 to an even more sensitive media.

The third discussion item involved interstate shipment of state inspected product which is in different versions in House and in Senate Farm Bills. Regarding plans for implementation, FSIS at this time has no position. FSIS has looked at fiscal impact of increased testing and how to support the initiative, such as the need for additional information technology structure and supervisors.

The Committee next met with USDA, Agriculture Research Service (ARS), Drs. Caird Rexroad, Steve Kappes and Dan Strickman: At the 2008 House budget hearing, ARS continued to advocate its basic mission, although overall the ARS budget request declined from \$1.121 billion to \$1.037 billion. The ARS budget will absorb this \$143 million budget impact through reduction and reorganization of science staff and some facilities.

ARS is responding to National Academy of Science, and Office of Management and Budget guidance to increase investments in societal oriented research and less on the animal production sector, including the role of native insects as vectors of foreign animal diseases, basic adaptive immunity and host-pathogen relations, the genomic underpinning of wildlife-livestock disease interface, and the implications of climate change for emergence and prevalence of zoonotic diseases. The ARS Office of Technology Transfer will continue to work to improve the availability and relevance of ARS research to industry and APHIS-Veterinary Services.

National Animal Health Laboratory Network updates were given by Dr. Barb Martin. She provided a summary report and recommendations coming from a 5-year review of the NAHLN. The summary included the following points.

- the review did not provide surprises, but helped re-enforce assumptions
- survey questions forwarded to lab directors and will go to other stakeholders
- Steering Committee met in January '08
- key recommendation: pull issues together and then communicate regularly
- Considerable discussion occurred regarding broad-based reportable disease system
- a "central" IT system is needed
- a system-wide mechanism/foundation should be established
- IT investments have historically been mad at end of year vs. upfront now

The initial goal of NAHLN was to have a lab in each state; however, that concept is now being reconsidered, using CEAH modeling to determine concept viability – target is to achieve best possible coverage with the best possible use of funds.

Toxicology in the NAHLN – Dr. Steve Hooser provided an update. There has been teamwork but lack of good communication/coordination among universities, private industry and federal government. A Working Committee created a white paper and a toxicology survey has been recently completed. They are addressing communication/partnering with the National Poison Control Center. The consensus is that

the “toxicology concept” should continue to move forward. NVSL has lost 2 positions and there is not new money for toxicology. APHIS supports the concept of toxicology in the NAHLN. Dr. Martin believes the short term will require leveraging of existing funds. Justifying toxicology funding via food supply protection, and pose the question, would FERN be a better partner? Toxicology may be more related to emergency response than surveillance. The Committee was reminded to consider the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as well. It was noted that the FDA is recognizing its role in food supply.

Martin then discussed VS Memo 580.4, which covers Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) investigations:

- the NAHLN Steering Comm began edits and revisions of 2004 version
- 3 groups: Policy, Laboratory Issues and Response/Communication
- next step: working group actions
- Business continuity remains a major concern – attempting to establish best practices for the laboratories.
- AI Table Top Exercises – upcoming and Barb Powers encourages/expects State Veterinarians to
- Participate. The EPA is also being considered as a stakeholder in this.

The NVSL was next. Dr. Beth Lautner provided an update on the QA Program, the LIMS, expected cost of utilities, and an early move into the new facilities. The move will require some duplication to provide adequate capability and coverage.

There is support for melding NAHLN and laboratory integration into national surveillance programs, including flow of info, sample id and tracking and flow of resulting.

A State Reportable Diseases Network blended with NAHLN is supported.

Dr. Jere Dick, Associate Deputy Administrator, Veterinary Services (VS), along with Dr. Mark Davidson met with the committee for approximately one hour and updated the group on several VS programs. A summary is provided below.

**Bovine Tuberculosis:** The regulatory process has been very frustrating, as it is defined by the Administrative Procedures Act of which APHIS only controls a small portion of that process. TB is a 90 year old program that needs modernizing. APHIS views primary risk as from three sources: 1) Mexican livestock, 2) wildlife, and 3) dairy cattle. Anticipate both Domestic and International rules to be released for comment sometime in the summer of 2008. There are currently inconsistencies between the CFR and the UMR. TB is one of 42 rules that APHIS has in process that they view as top priority. The TB ‘roping steer rule’ is at OMB, and they have requested a more rigorous economic impact statement. APHIS is considering a “TB Retreat”, bringing together state and federal TB epidemiologists to discuss the issues. The Mexican TB eradication program is requiring extensive investment of funds and resources, particularly regarding state reviews. APHIS has significant concerns with Mexico’s proposed rules (they do not address dairy cattle) and do not view it as “equivalent” as written. They will conduct a review of the Mexican program in early ’09, will release the proposed International Rule in the summer of ’08, and will compose a 5 year Strategic Plan (’08-’12) addressing metrics, measurements, and accomplishment standards.

**Cattle Fever Tick:** This issue is of concern to APHIS as the tick has been identified as expanding into the former “free” zone. They are attempting to identify alternative funding, and will ask for more in the 2010 budget.

All USAHA resolutions directed to VS were approved, with responses and should be at USAHA offices shortly.

**Johnes Disease:** APHIS is currently studying the issue of allowing non-veterinarians to submit official Johnes disease samples.

**NAIS:** USDA has already purchased \$1.5 million worth of RFID tags. It would be cost prohibitive and not possible to supply tags with individual state codes on them. They are amenable to working with the USAHA Animal Identification Committee to look into alternative solutions.

**Veterinary Services Process Streamlining (VSPS):** The VSPS process streamlining system is being used by accredited veterinarians in 27 states and 39 destination states. There are deficiencies within the system, particularly with regards to generating reports. The system will be upgraded within the next month with anticipated improved performance. John Piscanso has been hired as the new IT coordinator and will be developing an all encompassing IT Strategic Plan. They are very fortunate to be able to bring John on staff.

Scrapie: APHIS-VS had received a request to increase the 2010 Scrapie budget an additional \$10 million to a total of \$28 million. This will not be possible as there are huge other needs and any increases have to be offset in other areas

Outdoor Access for Organic Poultry: This issue comes under the jurisdiction of the Agricultural Marketing Service which sets the standards for 'organic' claims. AMS has reaffirmed the requirement and regulation and APHIS will not be able to affect change on another section's rules.

Dr. Dick led a general discussion involving the future of livestock and poultry disease surveillance. He indicated a trend toward a comprehensive surveillance program, by species, to maximize resources. He used swine as an example, where testing could occur for vesicular diseases, pseudorabies, brucellosis, trichinae, and other emerging diseases on a sample set from one animal.

Dr. Dick concluded his session by expressing his appreciation for the chance to interact with the GRC, and his support for the work of the USAHA and the AAVLD.

Under Secretary Bruce Knight took a moment to address the group, covering topics such as the National Animal Identification System and its progress and goals. NAIS remains a priority for the administration. Mr. Knight expressed his appreciation of the work of USAHA, and the role it plays in providing input to USDA.

The Committee requested a joint meeting with USDA/APHIS and DHS to clarify roles, responsibilities and authorities specifically for responding to animal health emergencies. Participants in the meeting included Dr. John Clifford, Deputy Administrator, APHIS/VS, Dr. Jose Diez, Emergency Management and Diagnostics Associate Deputy Administrator, APHIS/VS and Dr. Donald Noah, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary (WMD & Biodefense), DHS.

Within DHS, animal health emergencies are coordinated within Food, Agriculture and Veterinary Defense, Dr. Tom McGinn, Director, one of four divisions under the Office of WMD & Biodefense, which is one of four offices within the Office of Health Affairs, Dr. Jeff Runge, Assistant Secretary and Chief Medical Officer.

In an animal health emergency larger than a single agency could handle, Dr. Noah stated that his Office's role is to coordinate response efforts among multiple agencies and provide briefings to the Secretary of Homeland Security and the President. Specifically, DHS would be responsible for inter-departmental support that goes to the lead agency, in this case, USDA. Dr. Clifford confirmed that USDA is the lead agency to respond to animal health emergencies. Dr. Diez added that DHS and USDA staff are meeting regularly to coordinate response efforts.

Dr. Noah has identified the Strategic Guidance Statement for FMD as a priority deliverable for this year. This will serve as an outline for a national operational plan. DHS will work closely with USDA to develop this guidance document with a goal of completion by October. USAHA invited DHS and USDA to present the highlights of this plan at our 2008 October meeting.

USAHA would benefit from future Committee meetings jointly with DHS and USDA.

The Committee then met with Dr. John Clifford and Mr. Kevin Shea, Associate Administrator, APHIS, to discuss administrative level issues. The summary is outlined below.

Aquatic Health: Dr. Clifford participated in a committee with the Department of Interior and Department of Commerce to address the National Aquatic Animal Health Program (NAAHP), and garner input from industry. A plan has been developed and is awaiting approval. Discussions on the role of the NAHLN regarding aquaculture were held, with a survey being completed regarding the interest among laboratories. The involvement is still in early stages of discussion, but the idea of surveillance does tend to point to areas where disease is most likely to exist.

NAHLN funding is flat for FY 2008, though APHIS is requesting an increase for FY 2009.

Brucellosis: Questions still surround the Greater Yellowstone Area as leaders continue to press for action on brucellosis, though agreements for moving ahead still have concerns at the state level. APHIS will plan to meet with the governors to address these issues. In relation to the laboratory structure for testing, VS is in agreement with the USAHA resolution to restructure, though exact details have not been finalized. VS is interested in supporting an event at USAHA to celebrate the eradication in cattle in all 50 states.

National Centers for Animal Health: VS recognizes it is costly to operate the facility, however does not want to rely on staff cuts to continue.

Federal Rulemaking Process: USAHA expressed concern on the timeliness of the rulemaking process. APHIS is aware of the concern, and noted they must still abide by regulations of that process, particularly in light of many rules that face various levels of litigation. There was discussion of streamlining the process to promulgate rules that are not disease specific.

#### NAHLN Information Technology and Laboratory Integration to National Surveillance Programs

John Picanso joined by teleconference with John Clifford, Barb Martin and Beth Lautner to discuss the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) Information Technology (IT) and Laboratory Integration to National Surveillance Programs.

USDA-APHIS-VS has identified five priority IT issues: (1) VSPS module, (2) Select Agent Program Reporting Module (CDC requirement), AHSM module, Remedy System (centralized Helpdesk), NAIS module, and e-permit module. The cost for the 5 systems was projected at \$150million, and will require several years to complete. NAHLN IT funding is not in the current priority list.

USDA-APHIS-VS historically funded IT from end-of-year resources, and is currently developing a more business-oriented IT project plan.

USDA-APHIS-VS has scheduled an IT forum for March 17 -18, in Denver, Colorado, to gather National Assembly members' input on improvements/needs for the national IT system.

A NAHLN IT review was recently completed. VS subject experts are currently reviewing findings.

The Committee concluded its meetings with, Dr. Aaron Scott, Director, National Surveillance Unit (NSU), presented goals, approaches and accomplishments of Veterinary Services' National Surveillance Unit (NSU) in conception, planning and design of National Animal Health Surveillance Systems (NAHSS). These are broadly cooperative projects and programs, involving and relying on multiple units within Veterinary Services, as well as outside collaborations with livestock industries and other stakeholders.

The NSU has been established in 2004, following recommendations of the National Animal Health Safeguarding Review. A NAHSS Strategic Plan and a Surveillance and Data Standards document were developed to guide the development of surveillance on a regional and national level. Since its inception, the NSU has had a major role in BSE surveillance planning and implementation, as well as analyses of data and modeling to estimate maximum prevalence of BSE in the national beef and dairy cattle herd. The NSU has also been instrumental in coordinating VS's participation in national avian influenza surveillance activities, and most recently has studied and designed a program for viral hemorrhagic septicemia which is emerging in fish populations in the Great Lakes region of the United States. The NSU also is evaluating existing programs like brucellosis and scrapie surveillance, providing recommendations for changes to improve their efficacy.

The first national surveillance plan to be implemented and which was developed under NSU leadership is the classical swine fever (CSF) surveillance plan. This is the first foreign animal disease surveillance program to fully integrate the newly created National Animal Health Laboratory Network capabilities and capacities. A National Pseudorabies (PRV) Surveillance Plan, as well as a Vesicular Disease Surveillance Plan concept have been presented to and approved by the VS Management Team. Dr. Scott described that NAHSS is to move away from 'stovepiping' programs on a specific disease basis, and that, although plans up to now all have been developed for specific diseases, new plans are designed to take advantage and be integrated into prior plan activities. The new PRV plan thus is designed to take advantage of features of the implemented CSF plan, and the new vesicular disease surveillance plan is building on capacities of the previous plans, based on common epidemiologic characteristics (risk factors, introduction pathways) of the diseases and common / combined sampling designs. Integration of surveillance programs, at least on a species basis, is essential for increased efficiencies and efficacy of national animal health surveillance given resource limitations. To date integration of swine disease surveillance programs has progressed furthest and serves as a pilot for the development of integrated surveillance programs in other species.

Dr. Scott was asked to comment on the Surveillance Inventory (at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/inventory.htm>), a searchable database on all federal and many State surveillance activities, as well as on the quarterly produced web based report *Outlook* (at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/ncahs/nsu/outlook/index.htm>) which highlights selected VS surveillance activities. Dr. Myers suggested greater distribution of *Outlook*.

Following a question and some concern about communications shortcomings across VS units from President Leafstedt, Dr. Scott briefly commented on the application of HACCP principles in the

development of surveillance, which, although not fully applicable, may provide some means of adding flexibility to surveillance development for various diseases on a State basis.

Funding and resource needs were the subject of follow-up discussions. The NSU, in its 3.5 years of operation, was stocked up from 6 to 21 staff members which clearly shows great commitment of VS management to surveillance (21 members when fully staffed, including student help; up to now not having exceeded 15 staff members). High priority requests (BSE, AI) frequently took priority over surveillance plan development activities. Vesicular disease surveillance for multiple species and diseases, but with greatest emphasis on first detection of Foot and Mouth disease, needs extensive further planning and development of surveillance during a potential FMD outbreak. Surveillance for FMD in particular is not only essential in the outbreak zone, but is also crucial to determine disease freedom in non-affected parts of the country and freedom from disease post outbreak. Such a plan will help determine resource and operational needs for the NAHLN among others. Outbreak and post-outbreak surveillance is essential to ensure continuity and / or restoration of business and its development of vesicular disease surveillance plans needs to gain higher priority. A notable development is the newly produced 'Surveillance Toolbox,' designed to help responders plan surveillance during disease outbreaks (see *Outlook*, 2008 Quarter 1 issue). Drs. Lautner and Martin proposed to test the toolbox in upcoming avian influenza outbreak exercises.