

Report of the Committee on Import-Export

Chair: G. Reed Holyoak,
Vice-Chair: George O. Winegar (presided and conducted)

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The Committee was called to order by Chair Holyoak at 12:30 pm with 17 members and 29 visitors present. Chair Holyoak reviewed the Resolutions that were passed at last years meeting. Resolution 13 was read and the response by Veterinary Services (VS) was read and discussed and further action was tabled for the business session. Resolution 29 was read and discussed. Since there had been no formal response received concerning this resolution from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) the committee voted to table it until the business session when it could be revisited. Resolution 34 was read and the response from DHS was noted.

Mr. Steven G. Hennager, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS), VS, National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL), presented the latest results for testing of equines for piroplasmiasis utilizing the new competitive enzyme-linked immunoassay (CELISA) test. His report is summarized as follows: Import, export, and pre-import equine serum samples are tested for antibodies to detect exposure to piroplasmiasis. The current test is the CELISA. This test was implemented on August 17, 2005 at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories. Comparison between the CELISA and CF results was conducted for the first 2 months of the testing and reported here. Pre-import equine serum samples had 18 of 629 (2.9%) positive for *Babesia caballi* by the CF and 78 of 629 (12.4 %) by CELISA. Pre-import equine serum samples had 34 of 629 (5.4%) positive for *B. equi* by the CF and 69 of 629 (11.0%) by CELISA. Import equine serum samples had 2 of 1118 (0.2%) positive for *B. caballi* by the CF and 9 of 1118 (0.8%) positive by CELISA. Import equine serum samples had 11 of 1118 (1.0%) positive for *B. equi* by the CF and 22 of 1118 (2.0%). Export equine serum samples had 0 positive for *B. caballi* by the CF and 2 of 405 (0.5%) positive by CELISA. Export equine serum samples had 0 positive for *B. equi* by the CF and 5 of 405 (1.2%). The CELISA test has advantages in detecting chronic infected animals with greater sensitivity than the old complement fixation (CF) test.

Dr. Julie Gard [Waldrup], Departments of Pathobiology and Clinical Sciences, Auburn University, AL, presented a time-specific paper entitled "*Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus (BVDV) in existing and new technologies*". Her complete paper is included in its entirety in these proceedings.

Dr. Arnaldo Vaquer, National Center for Import and Export (NCIE), VS, APHIS, USDA, presented the annual report.

ANIMAL IMPORT ACTIVITIES

Canada and Mexico imports of live animals, semen, fertilized embryos, and other commodities

This past Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 saw a stabilization of our ruminant imports to the United States around 1.4 million animals. There was a drop of feeder cattle imported from Mexico because of the temporary suspension of the Spayed Heifer Program between April 6 and October 3, 2005. This slack in imports from Mexico was filled by cattle exports from Canada for cattle less than 30 months of age to the United States, which began on July 18, 2005.

The new Spayed Heifer Program is now run by Mexico and started on October 3, 2005, with an initial cadre of 25 Mexican surgeons and supervisors from the states of Chihuahua and Sonora trained in early September 2005. This program will now normalize the importation of feeder cattle from Mexico.

Significant efforts have gone into our assistance to the government of Mexico with their tuberculosis program, and to a limited degree their tick and brucellosis programs. Numerous tuberculosis reviews have been conducted on Mexican states that have asked Veterinary Services, APHIS, to review their state programs to upgrade their tuberculosis status. Once a state tuberculosis status is upgraded the testing requirements are lessened. Mexico now has more Modified Accredited states than ever and keeps improving

There have been several meetings between APHIS, VS and The Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries, and Food products (SAGARPA) (the equivalent of the USDA for Mexico) officials and scientists, Uniones Ganaderas officials, state officials and Mexican producers regarding the subject of ticks in Mexico as it affects the importation of feeder cattle into the United States, and therefore the importation of ticks especially from the northern states of Mexico. More meetings and conference calls are planned to improve the Mexican tick program and the USDA increasing cooperation with this program.

The brucellosis program of the state of Sonora is being evaluated for a possible upgrade to Class A status at the request of the state of Sonora. We are in the process of evaluating the data submitted to Veterinary Services, APHIS and when this is completed we will notify Mexico as to how to proceed.

Canada/BSE activities, as well as TSE working group activities:

In May 2003 Canada identified the first North American case of BSE. In response to this finding the US closed the border to the import of live ruminant and most ruminant products. In November 2003 APHIS published a proposed rule in the Federal Register and proposed to establish a new category of regions with regard to BSE – the BSE minimal risk region. We stated that the regions that could be eligible for a minimal risk classification would be (1) those regions in which a BSE-infected animal has been diagnosed, but in which measures have been taken that make it unlikely that BSE would be introduced from that region into the United States, (2) those regions that cannot be considered BSE-free even though BSE has not been detected, but that have taken sufficient measures to be considered minimal risk. In this rule we also proposed to add Canada to the new BSE minimal risk category and also proposed conditions of import for certain live animals and animal products.

APHIS received over 3000 comments to this proposal. In January, 2005 we published a final rule which was to be implemented on March 7, 2005. However in February the Montana judicial system issued a temporary injunction against USDA at the request of the trade organization R-CALF which prevented us from implementing the rule. This injunction was overturned and on July 18th the Canadian border was reopened for the import of feeder and slaughter cattle, bison, sheep and goats and certain animal products. In addition the rule removed any BSE related restrictions from the import of Camelids (llamas, alpacas, etc) and Cervids (deer, elk, etc) originating from minimal risk countries. The rule does not allow the import of breeding ruminants.

On July 15th APHIS placed several implementation documents on the National Center for Import and Export web site which described in detail the import requirements for certain categories of animals. In addition many conference calls were held with state vets and industry representatives in order to communicate the new import requirements. In general the opening of the border has gone smoothly. The issues that have arisen concerned the import of pregnant animals, which is prohibited, and the aging of animals on the health certificate. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has been extremely cooperative and proactive in addressing all individual issues that we have brought to their attention.

In February the Secretary of Agriculture decided to delay the implementation of one portion of the final rule; the import of meat from cattle over 30 months of age. It was decided to delay this import until APHIS could assess the risk of importing cattle that were over 30 months of age. This initiative is currently underway.

A Resolution was approved and forwarded to the Committee on Nominations and Resolutions that addresses these issues.

Live Animals From Canada Imported into the United States Since July 2005

Slaughter

Species	Number
Cattle	107,443
Bison	850
Sheep	629
Goats	0

Feeder

Species	Number
Cattle	104,166
Bison	56
Sheep	80
Goats	0

Other Worldwide Imports

We continue to have numerous requests to import bovine semen and embryos from European countries. We have been trying for over a year to receive final approval from the European Commission for two generic import protocols for bovine semen and embryos from EU countries that are not affected with FMD. In concert with OIE recommendations, these protocols do not require the exporting country to make any certifications relative to BSE. In the interim we have been supplying these protocols to individual EU member states when we are approached by a US importer. While we cannot bilaterally negotiate with individual countries we will accept their imports if certified to our standards.

We hope to start placing updated import protocols on the NCIE web page (www.aphis.usda.gov), in the near future.

In addition, we have had several requests to import ruminant germplasm from several African countries. APHIS is currently evaluating the regionalization requests of South Africa and Namibia. If these countries are regionalized for FMD and Rinderpest in the future, it may open the door to the import of new genetics from those countries; provided that the risks associated with other exotic animal diseases can be mitigated.

Reptile Ticks

We are performing a risk assessment to determine the potential of introducing heartwater (*Ehrlichia ruminantium*) via ticks on imported reptiles. Efficacy of and costs of possible mitigation measures are also being evaluated. It is estimated that the study will be completed in early 2006.

Honey bees

We are in the early stages of exploring the development and implementation of a honey bee export program.

Table 1: Animal Imports

Live Animals

Species	2002	2003	2004	2005
Bovine	2,361,547	2,033,330	1,456,827	1,492,220
Swine	5,910,125	6,815,459	8,639,603	8,095,114
Camelids	694	728	29	1,199
Cervids	2,121	146	0	88
Equine	38,785	37,493	52,428	43,176
Sheep	107,641	127,945	1,234	1,844
Goats	9,664	13,272	49	35
Zoo Animals	55	51	25	32

Germplasm

Embryos	2002	2003	2004	2005
Bovine	1,490	1,643	5,533	1,460
Caprine	64	0	0	0
Equine	0	1	2	4
Ovine	0	40	101	109
Semen				
Bovine	3,004,342	2,958,652	2,671,135	3,163,986
Equine	20,841	13,751	11,617	15,176
Porcine	17,447	6,853	2,086	1,437
Ovine	349	1,828	2,156	2,974
Cervidae	837	705	92	1,820
Caprine	33	401	0	72

Poultry

Type	2002	2003	2004	2005
Day-old chicks / live poultry	17,627,372	18,440,828	17,742,984	16,826,410
Hatching eggs (doz)	21,470,455	9,832,466	14,993,440	16,846,199
Other live poultry / birds	77,220	70,359	198,418	202,692
Ratites (ostrich, emu, rhea)	0	0	0	0

Bovine imports by port of entry

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Canadian ports	1,575,722	1,001,987	12,177*	222,053**
Mexican ports	784,274	1,031,338	1,444,650	1,270,053
Total	2,359,996	2,034,673	1,456,827	1,492,106

*(These were Hawaiian cattle moved to the US via Canada)

*(Border was closed to Canadian ruminates during 2004

** (Border was opened to certain Canadian bovines in July of 2005)

Swine imports by port of entry

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Canadian ports	5,909,291	6,814,037	8,639,403	8,095,114

Activities with Importation of Horses

On November 1, 2004, USDA, National Veterinary Services Laboratory implemented the CELISA test for piroplasmiasis for testing horses imported into the United States. However, we noticed a significant increase in the number of horses identified as positive for piroplasmiasis above what was expected with the more sensitive test. The reasons for this unexpected increase in positive animals was not initially identified, but since many of the results appeared to be false positives, we temporarily discontinued the CELISA. The test was rescinded on December 15, 2004 and the Complement Fixation Test (CFT) was reinstated as the test for importation testing for piroplasmiasis. After a thorough review of the testing methodology and much validation testing, NVSL determined that the increase in false positives was from fresh serum which contains an unidentified heat labile substance but adding a heat inactivation step to the serum samples upon arrival at the laboratory eliminates the effect. The change in the test protocol was validated and will be submitted to the OIE Standards Commission. The CELISA was reimplemented on August 17, 2005 for testing imported horses for piroplasmiasis. USDA, Center for Veterinary Biologics also approved a commercial CELISA kit for piroplasmiasis testing which is being used by NVSL for the import testing.

The Kentucky Horse Park and State of Kentucky have forwarded a bid for the 2010 World Equestrian Games Competition. In order to be successful in their bid, they have asked USDA to allow the participation of horses positive to equine piroplasmiasis (EP) to participate in field events. USDA formed the Equine Event Piroplasmiasis Evaluation Group (EEPEG) which developed a risk assessment and recommendations paper. The EEPEG reviewed the available tick data for that region, conducted a site visit of the Kentucky Horse Park, and developed a risk analysis of positive horses transmitting piroplasmiasis infection to susceptible horses. The EEPEG also provided recommendations for further tick surveys and a tick control/monitoring plan for the Kentucky Horse Park in the event the Games were awarded to Kentucky. The EEPEG concluded that with strenuous tick controls and mitigation measures in place, EP horses could participate in field events with minimal risk of transmission of EP to susceptible horses.

AVIAN/ZOO ANIMAL IMPORT ACTIVITIES

Continue working with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to add Malaysia to the joint order issued in 2004 for countries in which Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Subtype H5N1 is considered to Exist.

In an interim rule effective August 7, 2004, and published in the Federal Register on February 1, 2005. We amended the regulations in part 94 by adding Malaysia to the list of regions in § 94.6(d) where HPAI subtype H5N1 exists.

August 2005, Kazakhstan and Russia reported an outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Subtype H5N1 to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and to VS We began a work plan to publish an interim rule to include Russia and Kazakhstan to the list of regions in 94.6 in which HPAI subtype H5N1 is considered to exist.

“Importing a Pet Bird” leaflet will be printed and ready for distribution on 10/21/2005. This brochure replaces the last revision in 1995 and outlines special rules for bringing pet birds of non-US origin into the United States. This will be available in English and in Spanish.

Inspection of the privately owned and operated quarantine facility for zoological ruminants and swine that are to be imported into the United States, was conducted this past year. This facility was originally inspected and approved in the 1980's. It is owned and operated by the Warsaw Zoological Gardens (Warsaw Zoo) and the Botanical Gardens - Center for Preserving Biological Diversity of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The zoological ruminants and swine that are quarantined in this facility are accepted from regions that the USDA considers to be affected with Foot and Mouth Disease and/or Rinderpest. Approval is contingent upon removing the vegetation between the fences and submission of an updated photo. Cooperator has been informed and agrees to have the situation remedied and a photo submitted upon completion.

VS formed a small working group comprised of a few staff members to head up the Avian Influenza working group. VS has selected Gary Colgrove, (National Center for Import and Export, Sanitary Trade Issues Team), Michael David (National Center for Import and Export, Sanitary International Standards Team), Cristóbal Zepeda (Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health, OIE Collaborating Center for Animal Disease Surveillance Systems and Risk Analysis), and Cynthia Howard (PPD, Regulatory Analysis and Development) to be on the working group. The working group will be tapping into all the excellent expertise that APHIS has to offer.

BIOSECURITY FOR THE BIRDS UPDATE: APHIS' Legislative and Public Affairs recent Biosecurity For the Birds activities include WEBINAR WITH PETSMART CHARITIES available on the Petsmart Charities website <http://petsmartcharities.webex.com>.

All material is available in Spanish or English. Material now available are: DVD/VHS "Backyard Biosecurity" Practices to Keep Your Birds Healthy, Counter display with pocket and inserts, Biosecurity For the Birds brochure , Biosecurity For the Birds poster, Avian Influenza card and Exotic Newcastle disease card, Biosecurity For the Birds bookmark , Biosecurity For the Birds 6" ruler, Biosecurity For the Birds post-it notes

Pocket brochure on warning signs for AI and END and tips to protect birds. You may also reach this informative program through the VS bird biosecurity site at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/birdbiosecurity.

October 2005, Turkey and Romania reported and outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Subtype H5N1 to the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) and to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). We began a workplan to publish an interim rule to include Turkey and Romania to the list of regions in 94.6 in which HPAI subtype H5N1 is considered to exist.

ANIMAL EXPORT ACTIVITIES

Update on Trade with the European Union:

Animal Health Technical Working Group Negotiations:

In 2004, APHIS, Veterinary Services (VS) held four meetings of the Animal Health Technical Working Group (AHTWG) with the European Commission. Three additional meeting were held in 2005. This marks a significant acceleration of AHTWG activity over previous years.

The above meetings as well as other interactions led to resolution of or significant progress made on a number of outstanding issues, including:

- (1) Clarification and modification of European Union (EU) requirements for US exports of bovine semen and embryos to the EU.
- (2) Approval of a final draft of export health certificates to authorize export of bovine semen and embryos from the EU to the United States.
- (3) Approval of a final draft of an export health certificate to authorize export of equine embryos from the EU to the United States.
- (4) Agreement to work toward harmonization of testing protocols and standardization of testing sera regarding contagious equine metritis (CEM) in horses.
- (5) APHIS performed a site visit to 6 new EU Member States to evaluate their disease status for classical swine fever (CSF) and certain other animal diseases in November 2004 and June 2005. Another site visit to 2 additional new Member States is planned for November 2005.
- (6) APHIS published the "Stage 4" proposed rule on CSF on April 8, 2005. Stage 4 represents a novel approach that would recognize all of the original EU 15 Member States as low-risk for CSF and provide for much greater flexibility of U.S. reaction in the case of future CSF outbreaks in the EU.
- (7) APHIS published a Notice of Availability recognizing sub-national administrative units in 14 EU Member States on July 29, 2005. This will provide for greater flexibility in regionalization decisions in response to animal disease outbreaks in those Member States.
- (8) The EU allowed resumption of honeybee exports from the state of Hawaii based on information provided by APHIS.

- (9) The EU agreed to allow exports of mollusks and other aquaculture products from certain areas in the United States.
- (10) APHIS worked with the EU to avoid trade disruptions when a derogation expired in October 2005 from an EU requirement that certain facilities processing animal by-products be dedicated to “Category 3” materials only. This impacted a number of animal by-products, including pet food and pet food ingredients.

Update on Export of Semen/Embryos to the European Union (EU)

In October 2005, the European Commission’s Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) conducted an audit of APHIS’ process of ensuring the safety and quality of semen and embryos for export to the EU. VS’s National Center for Import and Export and VS field staff escorted the EU auditors to bovine semen collection centers and embryo transfer operations in the states of New York, Ohio and Wisconsin. The FVO audit team will provide a draft written report for comment no later than the end of January.

VS’s National Center for Import and Export is in the process of creating an electronic system to track information on semen centers and embryo teams seeking approval from the EU. This system will improve efficiency by minimizing re-entry of information and errors, track the multi-step approval process, and improve communications with the international and domestic VS field. This system will provide a means to audit the accuracy of the database and the ability to analyze the overall data set, as needed.

Export of Companion Animals

Although APHIS does not regulate the export of companion animals, we are developing standard responses for publication on our website as a service to pet owners. However, in the instance of military dogs traveling to the EU, NCIE was asked to solve a problem facing the military. Airlines were changing their policy and refusing to transport military working dogs or pets of military personnel without Federal endorsement. NCIE responded by following EU legislation (on dogs, cats and ferrets) that permits the “competent authority” to designate the signature of special veterinarians as sufficient to complete the paperwork. NCIE designated veterinarians in the employ of the US Department of Defense as “special” which eased the difficulties of moving dogs, cats and ferrets associated with the military to or through the EU (with the exception of the United Kingdom (UK)).

Ongoing Issues

Ongoing issues for resolution include (1) multilingual export certificates for transit through the EU, (2) export certification for day-old chicks, and (3) imposition of requirements by individual EU Member States that are different than EU legislation. Goals for the future include improving the VS web site information on animal exports and additional training for VS field officers working with semen collection centers and embryo transfer teams.

Export highlights for Central American and the Andean Countries

On March 17-18, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, U.S. successfully negotiated a protocol with SENASA, the Honduras animal health authority. The negotiated protocol now allows for the exportation of live ruminants from U.S. to Honduras

Free Trade Agreement US-Andean Countries for a total of 12 rounds of negotiations as of October of this year. Andean countries include Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.

Individual meetings held during FTA meetings with Chief Veterinary Officers (CVO) of Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Bolivia. Presentation and discussion of the results of the BSE investigation, surveillance and risk mitigation measures in the United States and a formal request to reopen live ruminant exports. Presentation and discussion of the AI surveillance program in U.S. related to AI - two year ban due to low path AI.

During the 12th round of negotiation on September 18-23, 2005 and as a follow up to our request to the Andeans to reopen the ban due to BSE and LPAI, the following information was presented by the Andeans:

A technical team was assembled to conduct a BSE and AI risk assessment:

For BSE:

- Dr. Roberto Acosta (Peru)
- Dr. Alex Andrade (Ecuador)
- Dr. Fabiola Rodriguez (Colombia)

For AI:

- Dr. Nestor Mossos (Colombia)
- Dr. Raul Zegarra (Peru)

The team will review the information provided by APHIS and will then request additional information as needed.

To verify the information provided, for clarification, and for additional information, a site visit will be necessary.

Once the risk assessment is completed, a communication to US will indicate the results and the measures implemented.

In addition to the FTA negotiations, the following contacts with animal health officials for Central America and Andean countries took place:

October 14, 2005, Plum Island, NY

Meeting with Dr. Alex Andrade, Animal health Director from SESA, Ecuador. Dr. Andrade is also a member of the BSE risk assessment team. Discussions included the measures taken by U.S. to mitigate the risk of BSE, and if additional information is required.

June 27-30, 2005; College Station, Texas

Colombia-USA Meeting on Cattle Exports to Colombia and the BSE Situation.

October 7, 8, 2004, David, Panama

Panama Veterinary Congress. Presentation of the U.S. surveillance program for BSE and AI. Meetings with MIDA officials to present the BSE efforts in the US and formal request to reopen market for live ruminants.

October 4-6, 2004, Bogota, Colombia

International Seminar on Avian Influenza for the Central America and Andean Region. Separate meetings in Bogota with CVO's and officials from the following Countries attending an avian influenza seminar organized by APHIS: Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, Nicaragua. BSE surveillance and risk mitigation measures discussed followed by a formal request to reopen market for live ruminants.

October 1, 2004; Bogotá, Colombia

Formal meeting in Bogotá with Colombia CVO and ICA officials to present: "BSE: Surveillance and Risk Mitigation Measures in the United States" and requested to Colombia to reopen live ruminant exports.

Other Exports to the Americas

Specific countries where we have had bilateral meetings include Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Mexico.

There has been much discussion of import and export and animal health requirements during bilateral consultative committee meetings and in the context of Free Trade negotiations. The consultative committee countries include Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, and Uruguay. These FTA countries include 6 CAFTA-DR countries and 3 Andean Pact countries.

Trilateral animal health working group meetings: 2 one in Mexico City, one in Vancouver, BC, Canada, to discuss I/E animal health issues affecting the 3 countries, includes bilateral issue negotiations with Canada and with Mexico.

NCIE has provided information regarding BSE to all Americas countries, LPAI to all countries that have remaining restrictions, bluetongue to Canada and Cuba.

NCIE has also participated in other technical meetings, including regarding the requirements for the export of honey bee queens.

Issues that still need to be resolved include improving access for US beef, live ruminants due to BSE, and improving access for US poultry due to remaining AI (and END) restrictions.

Animal exports to Asia and North Africa

Live ruminant exports continue to be impeded by the BSE-related concerns of foreign governments. China and Japan have been unreceptive to repeated USDA entreaties to open their markets to U.S. cattle. [It should be noted that Japan does allow importation

of U.S. camelids (e.g., llamas, alpacas).] Earlier this year, Tunisia showed interest in opening its market to U.S. cattle; its import health requirements, however, were proscriptive of trade and it was unwilling to make needed changes to them. Vietnam has shown some willingness to consider U.S. cattle imports and during recent negotiations provided USDA a draft protocol; USDA is considering the protocol and hopes to submit a counterproposal in the near future. Prior to the report of the BSE case in Texas, Israel appeared poised to open its market to U.S. feeder calves this year; it now looks as though the market will remain closed at least through mid-2006. Sets of import health requirements for U.S. breeding cattle and slaughter cattle have been negotiated with Lebanon and it is USDA's understanding that the Lebanese market is now reopen to these commodities.

Reportedly, swine exports to some East Asian countries (e.g., China) have been robust, at least for certain exporters. Malaysia has developed import health requirements for U.S. swine that are incompatible with shipments to that country; a USDA counterproposal is expected to be submitted shortly. Taiwan continues to require pre-export testing of U.S. swine for TGE by serum neutralization (SN) test while denying the use of an ELISA kit that differentiates antibody to TGE virus from antibody to porcine respiratory coronavirus (PRC); given the prevalence of PRC and the fact that the SN test is nondifferentiating, this stance is crippling trade. Thailand has invoked a provision in its import regulations to conduct inspections of facilities that provide swine and certain other animals (e.g., live poultry) to Thailand; USDA is working to convince Thailand officials that such Thai inspections are costly, inconvenient, and, at least for animals from the United States, unnecessary.

With respect to horse exports, Turkey has agreed to adopt the EU's import health requirements effective January 1, 2006. Currently, Turkey's requirements fairly closely parallel those of the EU but some additional requirements have been included. It is these additional requirements that have been problematic in clearing certain U.S. horses for export. Discussions are ongoing regarding the requirements applicable from now until the end of the year. South Korea's new import health requirements for horses are incompatible with trade with the U.S. The country has agreed, however, to allow entry of U.S. horses qualified under its old requirements except for the specific testing requirement for equine viral arteritis. Russia continues to effectively ban shipments of horses from the United States by requiring tests for diseases absent from the United States and stipulating that the animals must never have been vaccinated against West Nile fever or any other encephalitic disease (e.g., EEE). In response to a USDA update and request, Hong Kong recently lifted its special monkey pox-related import restrictions on U.S. horses, cats, and dogs, and its monkey pox-related import ban on all other U.S. mammals.

Successful negotiations recently transpired on Japan's import health requirements for U.S. ferrets, pet birds, and research rodents, and animals of these types thus continue to enter Japan. USDA worked successfully with industry to facilitate the registration by Japan of U.S. facilities supplying research cats and dogs and U.S. rabies testing laboratories.

China has reopened its bovine semen and bovine embryo markets to U.S. product following negotiations in November 2004 and facility inspections in May 2005. Negotiations are ongoing with India regarding import health requirements for U.S. bovine semen. India's current import health protocol effectively prohibits the importation of bovine semen from the U.S.

Table 2: Animal Exports

BY SPECIES

Live Animals

Species	2002	2003	2004	2005
Bovine	130,549	82,426	24,171	* 500
Equine	73,015	65,128	58,445	55,047
Ovine	479,896	216,829	85,430	**59,361
Caprine	34,503	28,282	5,824	**2,309
Porcine	271,125	188,245	349,310	105,148
Cervids	946	186	259	380
Camelids	103	116	106	36
Zoo animals	396	204	700	286
Bison	592	29	84	0

* Cattle exported to Cuba this summer

**Slaughter sheep and goats to Mexico

Poultry

Type	2002	2003	2004	2005
Day-old chicks / live poultry	41,611,945	36,821,151	38,677,805	37,909,453
Hatching eggs (doz)	80,354,301	86,886,458	65,452,462	70,760,893
Other live poultry / birds	44,624,523	48,040,190	43,364,010	37,433,552

Germplasm

Embryos	2002	2003	2004	2005
Bovine	12,005	13,562	12,063	8,474
Ovine	30	0	0	0
Porcine	100	0	1,093	1,271
Equine	2	54	43	27
Cervidae	0	0	0	0
Caprine	0	364	0	34
Semen				
Bovine	10,656,353	10,230,501	10,049,013	11,773,763

Equine	15,873	19,266	19,860	28,410
Porcine	21,994	15,409	23,734	27,192
Caprine	951	2,002	0	908
Ovine	1,368	400	2,171	
Cervid	1,209	497	369	184

Aquaculture

Type	2002	2003	2004	2005
Live fish, incl. mollusks & crustaceans	253,313,503	138,555,808	30,502,994	15,377,862
Eggs	109,795,049	132,185,008	154,718,512	145,906,179

Aquaculture Update

Staff Changes:

APHIS-VS hired two new aquaculture staff veterinarians in 2005; in March, Dr. Peter Merrill joined the National Center for Import and Export as an aquaculture specialist, followed by the addition in June of Dr. P. Gary Egrie to the Animal Health Programs (AHP) staff. Dr. Egrie will join Dr. Jill Rolland, also in AHP, to continue the development of the National Aquatic Animal Health Program begun in 2003.

Spring Viremia of Carp (SVC)

The USDA's SVC Program is now in its third year. There have been no reported additional outbreaks in farmed or wild populations of carp or other fish since the beginning of 2005. Voluntary surveillance has continued at individual facilities that produce SVC-susceptible species of fish, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service undertook an ambitious surveillance program to help determine the prevalence of the virus in natural fish populations from watersheds around the US. Preliminary results from that research indicate that the virus is probably not widespread in the environment (no virus was isolated from any of 1850 fish sampled), but results from an ELISA-based test being developed for more widespread use showed that a good number of fish may have been exposed to SVC virus in areas near previous outbreaks. Additional research is planned to further contribute to the epizootiology of SVC transmission.

A disinfection program to treat influent water supplying fish hatcheries in potentially SVCV-positive areas has been implemented on a pilot basis in North Carolina; this program is currently under technical assessment for its virus-neutralizing efficacy. An SVC import protocol that will restrict the importation of nine species of SVC-susceptible fish has also been developed and is currently being reviewed by USDA's Regulatory and Development Programs staff. After the implementation of these measures, currently in the latter stages of agency review as an interim rule, import permits and health certificates will be needed for these species.

Other Import/Export Issues:

APHIS, through its National Center for Import and Export, has been actively involved in developing export certificate endorsement guidance for VS field staff to expedite US exports of farmed aquatic animals of many types. Because of the complexity of the existing international regulatory framework, and the lack of a unified national or international policy for imports and exports of these commodities, a large number of scientific, regulatory and political factors must be dealt with for these issues. Good progress has been made with our North and South American trading partners for specific trade-related issues, and significant developments in the potential for exporting to the EU have occurred in 2005. A number of importation issues have been successfully resolved for specific aquaculture commodities, including shellfish, ornamental fish, food fish and fish eggs; and more are under development.

In conjunction with the Department of Commerce (NOAA-Fisheries) and Department of the Interior (US Fish & Wildlife Service), APHIS has developed a model export certificate that may be used for many types of aquaculture commodities originating from US producers. This certificate is currently in the intermediate stages of agency review.

APHIS aquaculture staff is involved in many ongoing and potentially significant issues facing aquaculture in the US and abroad. These include inputs to such areas as genetic engineering; aquatic pathogen laboratory approval and certification protocols; assay validations, and others. APHIS staff also participated in several of the aquaculture working groups and other aquaculture-related activities of the AVMA, and those of the Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture. Technical comments have also been sought from APHIS by the European Union and the OIE on draft revisions of important documents dealing with aquatic animal welfare, significant diseases and pathogens of farmed aquatic animals, and substantially clarified harmonized regulations for aquatic animal health.

National Aquatic Animal Health Plan

The Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture (JSA) is a Federal interagency group authorized by the National Aquaculture Act and serves to coordinate aquaculture efforts in the various agencies. The JSA has many task forces. The National Aquatic Animal Health Task Force (NAAHTF) has been charged to develop a National Aquatic Animal Health Plan. Dr. John Clifford is chair of the NAAHTF. The rationale for developing such a plan is to protect our wild and cultured resources, support efficient aquaculture, achieve efficient and predictable commerce, and meet our national and international trade obligations.

The NAAHTF is responsible for drafting chapters of the plan. Input is received from stakeholders through working group meetings and comments on draft chapters. To date, the first three draft chapters of the plan have been drafted and are being circulated to the JSA and stakeholders. Additional draft chapters are scheduled to be completed this year and will be included on the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Web site (http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/aqua/naah_plan.html). Our goal is to complete the plan by June 2006. The task force is on target to complete the plan by this date.

REGIONALIZATION

The following countries* are being evaluated for the status of the diseases or acceptability to export designated commodities:

- **Foot-and-Mouth Disease:** Colombia, Latvia, Slovenia, and Uruguay (ovine meat)
- **Classical Swine Fever:** Brazil, several regions in the EU including the Czech Republic Estonia, Germany (designated kreis), Italy (designated provinces), Latvia, Slovenia
- **Swine Vesicular Disease:** Brazil, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, and Slovenia
- **African Horse Sickness:** South Africa
- **Tuberculosis (TB):** Review efforts to regionalize the certain Mexican States for TB are ongoing
- **Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy:** Finland, Switzerland, Norway
- **HPAI:** Japan

*In some cases, only a certain region or regions are being evaluated for the indicated disease

VETERINARY REGULATORY SUPPORT, PLANT PROTECTION AND QUARANTINE

Veterinary Regulatory Support (VRS) has a major role as the liaison between USDA Veterinary Services, National Center for Import /Export and Customs and Borders Patrol (CBP) Agriculture Inspection, Policies and Programs (AIPP). VRS is responsible for providing alerts to the US ports of arrival via CBP-AIPP, informing them of changes in animal disease status world wide and providing appropriate mitigation procedures to be followed by CBP when regulating imported commodities from countries affected with a foreign animal disease of concern to US Agriculture. VRS, Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Veterinary Medical Officers in the field work tirelessly to provide technical and scientific expertise and guidance for CBP Agriculture Specialists and other CBP Officers in the regulation of imported animal products, animal by-products, related materials and international garbage.

Summary of Activities:

100,895 Foreign Vessels Arrived
35,918 Foreign Vessels Boarded
5,217 Foreign Vessels Boarded for Garbage Violations
12,330,122 kg Weight of garbage removed from foreign vessels

522,921 Aircraft arrived from foreign locations
34,960,717 kg Weight of garbage removed from aircraft arrivals

Agriculture products confiscated at the Border

Site	Number of Lots	Weight (kg)
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Maritime	2,314	42,219,367
Aircraft	228,669	476,198
Land Border	150,215	2,517,580
Mail	25,538	40,947

Miscellaneous : Footwear Cleaned and Disinfected 120,196

Dr. Joyce Bowling, USDA, APHIS, NCIE, reported the activities of The National Center for Import and Export, Export Animal Products Staff. The National Center for Import and Export, Export Animal Products Staff had many different focuses during the last year. One major priority was to reestablish markets that were lost or decreased due to detection of BSE within the United States. In addition, we also worked hard to reestablish markets that were affected by exotic Newcastle disease and avian influenza within the United States.

We completed and launched our first web-based export certification training course for VS field personnel. This allows us to provide substantial training to all people involved in export certification, immediately when there is a need. It also assists us in improving consistency in our field offices. We have started working on the second portion of the course, which should be launched in 2006. In addition to this training for our field personnel, we also hosted a training course for exporters of pet food and rendered products. This was a great success and we hope to expand this program to other industries.

Listed below are the countries with which we discussed the export of various animal products. Many of these negotiations resulted in opening new markets, in other cases we were able to expand or maintain markets.

Argentina

Spray dried egg
Ovine greasy wool
Edible gelatin derived from porcine skins
Bovine hides

Australia

Pet food

Barbados

Pet food

Brazil

Hog casings

Canada

Bovine blood products
Bovine meat and bone meal

Inedible offals

Chile

Beef meat

Porcine meat

China

Pet food

Lard and poultry fat

Poultry offal

Poultry meal and porcine meal

Porcine protein concentrate

Porcine spray dried blood

Photographic gelatin

Collagen casings

Beef meat

Tallow

Colombia

Pet food

Dairy products

Cuba

Pet food

Dairy products

European Union

Blood products for technical use

Blood products for animal feed

Pet food

Meat and bone meal

Egypt

Beef meat

Hong Kong

Pet Food

Iceland

Pet Food

India

Pet food

Feathers and down

Indonesia

Rendered meals negotiated
Poultry and feather meals
Pet food

Italy

Milk replacers for zoo animals

Japan

Casings

Artificial casings derived from imported bovine materials

Heat treated poultry meat and liquid egg products

Blood for technical purposes (other than animal feeding)

Beef meat

Korea

Fresh poultry meat and products

Bovine hides

Lebanon

Beef meat

Mexico

Fetal bovine serum (FBS)

Rendered meals

Inedible milk products

Poland

Blood products for use in preparation of pet foods

Russia

Rendered fats

Singapore

Shell eggs

South Africa

Bile

Taiwan

Porcine origin non-rendered blood

Livestock feed containing no animal origin components

Animal feed preparations- other than dog and cat food

Fetal bovine serum

Bovine serum

Thailand

Poultry meat

Turkey

Pet food

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Beef meat

A question was raised asking, in the light of recent research showing prion proteins in inflamed mammary glands of scrapie infected sheep [Ligios C., et al. *Nature Medicine*, 11:1137-1138 (2005)], if any regulations were being contemplated on checking somatic cell counts in hard cheese or the milk to become hard cheese. The response was that that had not yet been considered.

Mr. Rick McDonald, Canadian Livestock Genetics Association, reported the concerns of the Canadian dairy cattle industry in relation to the enforcement of U.S. importation rules for cattle as they relate to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). In summary, BSE has caused extreme hardship to cattle producers, importers and exporters in the USA, Canada and Mexico relative to it not being highly contagious and of low prevalence in North America. Furthermore, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) has published updated guidelines for the importation of animals and animal products appropriate to the BSE status of the country of origin. Additionally Canada, Mexico and the US have signed an agreement to implement common, science-based BSE import policies. The lack of uniform application to these policies not only damages trade among our three countries it also limits trade with other countries due to the lack of consistency and policy application. A resolution was formulated to address this issue and was provided for discussion and was approved in the business session of our meeting.

Dr. M. Daniel Givens, Departments of Pathobiology and Clinical Sciences, Auburn University, AL, presented our second time specific paper entitled, "*Evaluation of risks of transmission of bovine viral diarrhea virus (BVDV) to recipients of bovine embryos arising from fertilization with virus-infected semen*". In summary, recent legislation has sought to ensure that embryos imported into the European Union were not produced from semen collected from virus-infected bulls. Semen can be contaminated with bovine viral diarrhea virus (BVDV) due to persistent infection, acute infection, or persistent testicular infection. The likelihood of collecting semen contaminated with BVDV depends on the incidence and duration of these infections within a population. The potential for BVDV to infect embryos via semen appears to be negligible, particularly for in-vivo-derived embryos, despite limited investigation. If embryos were infected with BVDV via semen, the potential for virus to infect embryo recipients or produce a persistently infected calf has not been identified despite the transfer of many hundreds of thousands of bovine embryos within and between countries. Thus, available scientific research and practical application of advanced reproductive techniques fail to demonstrate a significant epidemiological risk of BVDV-contaminated semen used to produce bovine embryos.

Dr. Robert F. Kahrs, Coordinator, Global Initiatives in Veterinary Education, St. Augustine, FL, presented information concerning the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges' launch of a program called global initiatives in veterinary education to support companion colleges in developing countries. Strengthening veterinary education abroad will improve livestock health infrastructures, expedite international trade, improve food safety and sow the seeds of world peace by supporting human-animal bonding and reducing starvation. This program is intended to provide needed expertise for governmental and private veterinarians, strengthen regulatory infrastructures, improve cooperation among the health professions, promote animal health extension and outreach programs and encourage academic research within and between developing and developed countries. A resolution was provided for discussion and was approved by the Committee. The Resolution was forwarded to the Committee on Nominations and Resolutions.

Mr. Paul Taylor, Taylor Llamas, Bozeman, Montana, Presented information on a protocol they developed for cryopreserving llama embryos and the need for the development of import protocols for South American camelid embryos. In summary he reported that international movement of embryos of the South American camelids has not been possible because, in these species, the embryos are retained in the oviduct until after hatching and therefore cannot be collected nonsurgically while still in the zona pellucida (ZP). Currently USDA, APHIS, VS regulations require the presence of an intact ZP on embryos for importation into the US.

A more significant barrier to international movement of camelid embryos has been the fact that these hatched blastocysts have proved to be nearly impossible to freeze by standard methods that rely on movement of the cryoprotectant down a concentration gradient from outside the trophoctoderm layer of the conceptus in to the aqueous blastocoel fluid. It is universally accepted that embryos intended for movement across international borders must be cryopreserved so they can be held for a period of time greater than the incubation period for any diseases of concern to allow post embryo collection testing of the embryo donor animal. Donor animals can then be retested to provide reliable assurance that they were not infected with pathogens of concern at the time of embryo collection.

A new technique involving direct injection of cryoprotectant in to the blastocoel fluid and extraction of almost all of the blastocoel fluid to allow rapid equilibrium of the entire conceptus prior to cryopreservation, as well as the post-thaw injection of culture medium to reinflate the trophoctoderm has opened the door to practical cryopreservation of hatched blastocysts. Now hatched embryos of South American camelids can be cryopreserved and held until post collection testing can be accomplished.

Risk assessment of the animal health status of the country, region and farm of origin of embryos intended for importation, coupled with the ability to cryopreserve and hold these embryos until after post collection testing has shown to provide a wide margin of

statistical certainty that the embryos imported under these strict guidelines are free from disease and safe for importation without a ZP.

Finally, international movement of cryopreserved hatched blastocysts of the South American camelid will allow increased trade in the genetics of these species with a dramatic reduction in the health risks and animal welfare issues involved in the importation of live animals. A resolution was provided for discussion and was approved by the Committee and forwarded to the Committee on Nominations and Resolutions.

Chair Holyoak presented comments from Dr. Percy Hawkes regarding Resolution 13 from last year concerning the importation of fetal bovine serum (FBS). We have been informed by the NCIE staff that a new proposed rule is being prepared by USDA-APHIS-VS similar to the 1994 proposed rule to allow the importation of irradiated FBS. This new proposed rule under consideration was alluded to in the last sentence of the APHIS response to Resolution 13. Dr. Hawkes presented the following 2 observations and recommendations regarding the VS response to the 2004 Resolution 13) The VS response to the 2004 Resolution 13 does not reflect that the FBS industry proposed a rule to allow the importation of irradiated FBS from countries free of FMD *with vaccination*. It only stated that "USDA has received a proposal from private industry to irradiate FBS sourced from FMD countries". It was recommended that as APHIS considers the proposal of a new rule that it reflect the original request from industry; "FBS sourced from FMD countries free of FMD with vaccination". 2) The proposal submitted by private industry to VS also asked that APHIS establish specific measures (which were not part of the 1994 proposed rule) to address the problem of fraud and misrepresentation in the FBS industry. The APHIS response to the 2004 Resolution 13 did not address this need or problem. The measures suggested by industry would allow VS, as well as the FBS industry, to establish long-needed standards and guidelines aimed at addressing fraud and misrepresentation. It was recommended that standards and guidelines to address the problems of fraud and misrepresentation also be included in the proposed rule, which is being considered to be re-proposed by VS.

Resolution 29 from last year concerning priority passage for live animal cargo at border crossing was taken up from being tabled and was passed after slight modification. This Resolution was forwarded to the Committee on Nominations and Resolutions.