



UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

115th Annual Meeting
September 29- October 5, 2011
Buffalo, New York

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 4, 2, 5, 20 and 23 Combined APPROVED

SOURCE: USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK
USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE ON TRANSMISSIBLE DISEASES OF SWINE
COMMITTEE ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES OF HORSES

SUBJECT MATTER: NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK FUNDING

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) is our nation's early warning system guarding against emerging and foreign animal diseases that threaten the nation's food supply. The NAHLN also plays a large role in zoonotic disease surveillance and the protection of public health. The NAHLN has proven itself to be an effective way to expand and strengthen veterinary diagnostic capabilities in a coordinated network across the United States. Diagnostic capacity is a critical asset in case of major animal disease events, and any reduction in the NAHLN budget places our animal industries, the security of our food supply, and consequently our citizens' health and the United States (US) economy at enormous risk.

Federal support of the NAHLN allows veterinary diagnostic laboratories to perform high-consequence disease surveillance to protect against several foreign animal diseases, including foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and avian influenza. Response to recent FMD outbreaks in Asia cost billions of dollars resulting in millions of cattle and swine destroyed and reducing food security. According to estimates by federal agencies, the cost to the US for a similar outbreak in our country could be as much as \$100 billion. Results from several studies show that for every hour FMD goes undetected, the cost of response increases by as much as \$10 million. Surge capacity (increased sustained testing in case of a disease outbreak) in the network has been built to a level that will help offset disease-related economic losses to industry, states and the federal government through rapid diagnostic deployment and efficient and secure communication. However, limited funding of the NAHLN to date has not allowed expansion of the NAHLN to achieve a level projected to more fully diminish losses from disease outbreaks.

At the FY 2010 funding level from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative and from the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal



and Plant Health Inspection Service to support the NAHLN and the NAHLN laboratory infrastructure, economic losses associated with response and recovery from a serious disease event, and possible human losses, will far exceed this figure if NAHLN capability is not increased. To sufficiently meet US food security, and animal and public health needs, \$30 million is needed annually to support a fully functional laboratory infrastructure and to continue enhancements for network capacity and information technology capabilities. Further, since the annual appropriations process creates challenges for laboratories in sustaining the federal investment into NAHLN infrastructure capacity and capability, a more stable funding mechanism on a multi-year basis is needed.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association and American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians request that the Secretary of Agriculture support and that Congress authorize \$30 million in annual funding for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN). We further request that in order to adequately sustain the network to ensure food safety and security, animal and public health, and the United States economy, Congress fund the NAHLN through a stable funding mechanism.

The United States Animal Health Association and American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians urge Congress to fully fund the authorized amount to ensure that NAHLN infrastructure, capacity, and capability are maintained and enhanced.

RESPONSE:

APHIS and NIFA

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) is a critical part of our national emergency preparedness and response infrastructure. Global and emerging animal health issues make the NAHLN even more critical. Throughout the 10 years of its existence, the NAHLN has significantly enhanced our diagnostic capabilities and the capacity to address high consequence animal health situations. We are especially pleased with how the partnership between USDA and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) has contributed to NAHLN's success. We appreciate your support of NAHLN and will keep your suggestion in mind as we develop the FY 2013 budget.



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JAN 18 2012

Mr. David T. Marshall
President
United States Animal Health Association
4221 Mitchell Avenue
St. Joseph, Missouri 64507

Dear Mr. Marshall:

Thank you for your letter of November 14, 2011, forwarding resolutions passed by the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) at its October 2011 annual meeting. I apologize for the delayed response.

I appreciate USAHA's sharing its views on issues of importance to your organization. I look forward to further dialogue with USAHA on these and other issues as we evaluate the health needs of animals in our country and move ahead with important animal health initiatives. To address your specific resolutions, I have asked officials with the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and National Institute of Food and Agriculture to respond in more detail.

Again, thank you for your letter. I value USAHA's longstanding partnership with USDA and look forward to continued collaboration advancing our mutual efforts to safeguard and promote U.S. animal health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Vilsack", written in a cursive style.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

Enclosure

APHIS and NIFA Response to USAHA Regarding USAHA Resolutions 4, 9, 30, and 36

Resolution 4

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Resolution 9

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) will continue to support animal health and production-related efforts through our Agriculture and Food Research Initiative programs. These programs provide opportunities for science-based discoveries. Recent programs such as NIFA's pre and post-doctoral fellowships and the National Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program are proving to be extremely beneficial in filling subject-matter-expertise gaps in animal health sciences, as well as ensuring adequate veterinary services coverage across the Nation. USDA will continue to ensure that adequate funds are available to address programs that are critical in supporting animal health sciences and infrastructure across our Nation. We appreciate your support of NIFA programs and will keep your suggestions in mind as we develop the FY 2013 budget.

Resolution 30

USDA is committed to continue building its partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in support of a collaborative, unified approach to Federal pre-harvest food safety efforts. Drawing on its expertise in veterinary medicine, epidemiology, pathology, microbial biology, and other areas, APHIS' Veterinary Services (VS) works closely with its partners, including HHS' Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to develop strategies to effectively address pre-harvest issues. In addition, Secretary Vilsack has created the USDA One Health Multiagency Coordination Group to ensure that APHIS VS and other USDA agencies with relevant responsibilities are working together on food safety issues and other issues where animal and human health are linked.

Resolution 36

We appreciate USAHA's support of the National Veterinary Stockpile as a component of the Nation's agriculture and food defense strategy and will keep your suggestions in mind as we develop the FY 2013 budget.