

REPORT OF THE USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK

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The Committee met on October 10, 2009 at the Town and Country Hotel, San Diego, Calif., from 12 noon until 3 p.m. There were 17 members and 13 guests present. The attendees introduced themselves.

The first presentation was from Dr. Beth Lautner who presented the USDA vision for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) and update on the NAHLN coordinating council formation. She reviewed the history of the NAHLN and defined the roles of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) and USDA, National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in the NAHLN. She announced that members of the newly formed coordinating council had been contacted and that a draft charter was available for them (which the coordinating council may review and edit). The first meeting is to be yet this year.

The next discussion was how the current committee would interact with the NAHLN coordinating council. It was recognized that the AAVLD/USAHA joint committee could be a forum for larger AAVLD and USAHA input and a forum for industry input as well. It was further pointed out that the joint committee would be more flexible and able to write resolutions and letters to USDA as well as assist with legislative issues. The joint committee will continue for 1 year and be co chaired by Barb Powers and Dave Marshall and they will ensure that items from the committee are addressed to the coordinating council. Further discussion of how this committee could interact with or combine with the laboratory workforce committee ensued.

The next issue was a discussion of response to letters written to USDA by the committee (and approved by the respective executive committees). These included issues related to blanket purchase agreements, wildbird influenza surveillance and Toxicology. Dr. Lautner mentioned she has funding for influenza work targeted to H1N1 and swine influenza but could perhaps be addressed to swine health surveillance or influenza in other species. A discussion also ensued about the challenges the swine industry faces regarding the consequences of sample submission to the NAHLN if a positive H1N1 virus was detected.

The next issue was Toxicology. Steve Hooser gave an update on the progress of the Toxicology in the NAHLN workgroup. They have worked with FDA and AVMA to seek funding for the network. They are involved with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and PetNet and have had limited funding for one proficiency test. The data from the survey of lab capacity and equipment will be submitted for publication. It was decided that the Toxicology workgroup would draft a letter for funding a Toxicology network similar to the Food Emergency Response Network (FERN), or a part of the FERN, (using the white paper they have already written), this would be reviewed by the AAVLD/USAHA committee and signed by the respective organizations executive boards.

The next issue was an update from Dr. Shelton from AVMA explaining the efforts AVMA have done for the NAHLN. They have a one page request for support for \$30 million for the NAHLN and \$12 for Toxicology (previously approved by this committee). They have been working on addressing the funding shortfall by talking to legislative staffers. A discussion ensued on the best methods of funding the NAHLN, through the Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative or to "codify" the NAHLN. This will be further discussed.

The next issue was the newly formed modeling workgroup and the draft charge was finalized. Dr. Hullinger will chair this workgroup. Other updates included the Federal Emergency Management Agency

(FEMA) equipment list input, the progress of the IT subcommittee and ongoing work of the NAHLN. A discussion of Aquaculture was the final issue discussed.