

## **UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2006**

**RESOLUTION:** 29 APPROVED

**SOURCE:** COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND RABIES

**SUBJECT MATTER:** A NATIONAL PLAN FOR RABIES CONTROL IN WILDLIFE

**DATES:** MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, OCTOBER 12-18, 2006

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The epizootic of raccoon rabies continues to spread into uninfected areas of North America. The natural barriers that previously restricted the raccoon rabies variant to the Atlantic coast states were recently compromised. Barriers have been breached in Ohio and Cape Cod, Massachusetts, with a first-time occurrence in 2004 of raccoon rabies on Long Island, New York. Translocation of raccoons with incubating rabies infection may have contributed in these instances. This creates the potential for a large portion of the nation to be affected by raccoon rabies. The cost of living with raccoon rabies cannot accurately be determined, but is substantial according to numerous local, state, and federal studies. This epidemic has reached national proportions and control efforts require coordination at the national level.

Rabies vaccine, licensed for use in raccoons and coyotes by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), is available for delivery to wildlife through bait distribution. The use of oral rabies vaccination has been successful in the control of raccoon rabies in urban and rural environments, limiting the spread of raccoon rabies to uninfected areas, and dramatically controlling and eliminating rabies in coyotes in south Texas. Large-scale control efforts must continue to be developed and implemented over large areas of the epizootic front to prevent the spread of rabies in raccoons throughout the continent. The USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services (WS) has provided substantial leadership, funding and program support to assist states with oral rabies vaccination programs which includes raccoon, coyote, gray fox and skunk rabies. The USDA-APHIS-WS has also facilitated numerous meetings involving federal, state and provincial agencies to address the potential for coordinated, regional rabies control efforts, with the goal of developing a national rabies control program that would complement rabies control programs in Canada and Mexico. The National Working Group on Rabies Prevention, coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV), the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), has developed recommendations for enhancing rabies control, including wildlife vaccination.

**RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) to continue to seek additional funding for terrestrial wildlife rabies control programs. USAHA further encourages state and local governments and regional alliances to support this activity through appropriate funding channels. USAHA also strongly encourages the USDA-APHIS-WS, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) to allocate appropriated funding and resources to assist states and local agencies in the development, maintenance and expansion of coordinated regional wildlife rabies control and vaccination programs with the ultimate goal of eliminating terrestrial strains of rabies regionally and then nationally.

## **RESPONSE:**

### **United States Department Of Agriculture (USDA), Animal And Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS), Wildlife Services(WS)**

We are committed to supporting this Resolution. Raccoons, coyotes, and gray foxes continue to challenge oral rabies vaccination zones and threaten to spread to uninfected areas. We recognize the need for additional funding for strategically coordinated rabies control and we will work to address those needs within available funding. We accept the charge of cooperating with the United States Public Health Service, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and local, county and state governments. We have initiated a North American Rabies Management Planning process with our counterparts in Mexico and Canada; and our state, federal, and local cooperators to advance surveillance and control in border areas and to better achieve rabies management goals. Without the continued cooperative support from all entities, the goal of eliminating rabies from terrestrial carnivores such as the raccoon would not be attainable.

### **Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

We are highly supportive of the concept of oral wildlife vaccination as a critical part of rabies prevention and control. The original concept of oral wildlife vaccination evolved initially at CDC. Current investigators in our rabies program were responsible for the development of the only vaccine licensed for carnivores in the USA. As the national reference center, CDC is responsible for the laboratory-based surveillance of rabies in humans, domestic animals, and wildlife. Moreover, CDC has deployed a new field test utilized by USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services staff for enhanced surveillance. In addition, RabID is a modern GIS-based surveillance system that utilizes both public health and field submission data, for real-time decisions related to oral vaccine deployment. Besides our heightened research endeavors focused upon the development of new vaccines, CDC rabies staff serve as major collaborators with USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services in the national program of wildlife rabies control.

**Office of the Surgeon General – NO RESPONSE**

