

# UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

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**RESOLUTION NUMBER:** 38 APPROVED

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

**SUBJECT MATTER:** THE NORTH AMERICAN RABIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

At the recent 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Rabies in the Americas Conference held at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the North American Rabies Management Plan was officially signed by agencies of the United States (US), Canada, and Mexico and Navajo (Tribal) Nation. This historic event will enhance coordination and support the control of terrestrial rabies in North America which has led to the successful eradication of canine variant in the US as proclaimed by CDC at the World Rabies Day in 2007. It also continues to support the control of canine rabies variant in coyotes in Mexico as well as gray fox rabies variants in Texas along the US-Mexico border as well as the eastern seaboard raccoon rabies vaccine program in the US-Canadian border utilizing RABORAL VRG® (Merial) and other approved vaccines. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources also continues control programs with the ultimate goal of elimination of arctic fox rabies in western Ontario utilizing a new human adenovirus recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) oral rabies vaccine, ONRAB® (Artemis).

## **RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) supports the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continued surveillance and control of the canine variant of rabies to prevent the reintroduction of this strain into the United States (US). USAHA also encourages the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) and the CDC to allocate appropriated funding and resources to cooperate and collaborate with state and local agencies in maintaining this canine-free rabies status and expand the coordinated regional wildlife rabies control and vaccination programs for raccoon rabies on the US eastern seaboard and gray fox rabies in Texas, and expand the preliminary research into the control of skunk variant rabies and control programs targeting skunks and feral dogs in the US, utilizing oral vaccination. USAHA encourages WS and CDC to fully implement and support the recently signed North American Rabies Management Plan, which will provide a dynamic framework for enhancement of rabies control in North America with the ultimate goal of eliminating terrestrial strains of rabies regionally, nationally and throughout the North American continent.

## **RESPONSE:**

### **USDA-APHIS, Wildlife Services**

USDA, APHIS, WS, agrees with USAHA Resolution Number 38, *The North American Rabies Management Plan (NARMP)* on the importance of continued surveillance and control of the canine rabies variant to prevent reintroduction into the United States. WS, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), State and other cooperators made a serious commitment toward the elimination of canine rabies beginning in the mid-1990's, with success achieved in September 2007 when the United States was declared canine rabies free under World Health Organization (WHO) standards.

However, we recognize that surveillance in border areas with Mexico as well as shifting control south of the U.S. border must be considered to maintain and build on this success. We have committed to working closely with our State, Provincial, and Federal counterparts in Mexico and Canada to complete and implement the NARMP to establish a framework for enhanced border rabies work. That goal was met with the signing of the plan by the APHIS Administrator, CDC Director, a Representative of the Navajo Nation, and counterparts in Canada and Mexico on October 3, 2008. The plan is now in the early implementation phase and we expect this process to facilitate more effective rabies surveillance and control along our borders. The plan identifies four areas for international collaboration: information exchange, enhanced rabies surveillance, control, and research. Work is already being conducted under each of these areas and with this framework we are optimistic that we can better capitalize on other opportunities such as comparative vaccine analyses in the coming year so that advances can be made toward licensing more effective oral rabies vaccines for use in wildlife and feral dogs.

Lastly, WS and cooperators continue to conduct coordinated wildlife rabies control in the U.S. Myriad challenges in the face of level budgets require adherence to science-based decision making with cooperators so that areas representing high risk of rabies spread are treated as a priority. In addition, we continue captive studies with CDC and others on canine adenovirus-rabies glycoprotein vaccine in 2008 and expect that an oral vaccine field trial can be conducted within next 18 months.