



USAHA

Protecting Animal and Public Health Since 1897

United States Animal Health Association Newsletter - Vol. 27, No. 1, March, 2000

VS Sets Future Directions

USAHA Members Visit Nation's Capitol



From left: S. Halstead, R. Swanson, R. Frost, H. Towers, P. Blanchard, E. Zirkle, R. Eckroade, M. Salman, A. Clark, F. Elvinger, H. Chaddock, B. Hillman, K. Maher, M. Lea and J. Huse on way to lunch hosted by John Melcher in the Senate chambers of the Capitol and later visits with legislators.

by Dick McCapes

The USAHA Government Relations Committee and committee chairs met in Washington, DC February 14 through 18. A total of 25 members attended this year's meeting.

The purpose of the meeting, held each year at this time, is to visit with federal agency and industry organization representatives and legislators located in the

DC area about issues of common interest.

The meeting is organized by the Association's first vice president, this year falling to Mike Chaddock.

The Carlyle Suites Hotel in downtown Washington, DC served as the headquarters for the Committee. Representatives from agencies and organizations met

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By Alfonso Torres, Deputy Administrator Veterinary Services, APHIS, USDA

From the eradication of bovine pleuropneumonia in 1892 through the last outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in 1930, and the



Alfonso Torres

now near eradication of brucellosis in domestic cattle, the country has counted on Veterinary Services (VS), within USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), to lead the way in protecting animal health and encouraging trade.

Today, the global marketplace and modern animal agriculture require sophisticated tools. Risk analysis, quality assurance, computer modeling, and cutting-edge software enhance producer practices and provide useable information about emerging market conditions.

External factors such as international trade, public perception of animal health, science and technology all shape VS' future direction. To meet a rapidly changing environment, VS put a strategic planning process in place to guide its work and funding goals. Several years ago, more than 2000 people outside

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President's Corner

The Government Relations Meeting in Washington was a great success. About 20 committee chairs or co-chairs participated in addition to the entire Board of Directors. Mike Chaddock introduced a few program innovations that proved to be very successful. I will not elaborate further except to say that visits to the Hill supporting the funding for renovation and expansion of the facilities in Ames were well received. Watch for the entire committee report on www.usaha.org.



Ernie Zirkle

The participation of USAHA

in this year's OIE preparation was not as expected or projected during the meeting in San Diego.

Dr. Torres has had the assistance of several very capable people in the unit that will be handling international issues in the future; however the people changed frequently and there was poor continuity. He has now selected a full-time permanent person to handle the unit and has assured me that we will be an integral part of the unit in its year-round activities.

We did send all laboratory issues to Bruce Akey who distributed them to appropriate people for comment. Some of the other items were distributed for comment with a very short turnaround time. We plan to have a confidential web site for dissemination of next year's chapter

changes. Obviously, we are not where we planned to be by this time with participation in other international meetings, so the promises I made to some of you cannot yet be fulfilled. I will keep you informed of progress.

The apparent spread of tuberculosis in white-tailed deer in Michigan and the recent change in direction the Michigan Department of Agriculture has taken on some issues is quite disturbing and may have an impact on the way we all deal with disease in livestock in the future.

Mike Chaddock is caught in the position of supporting approaches that he does not recommend. The Board of Directors felt so concerned that I have appointed a Tuberculosis/Wildlife

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1999/00 USAHA officers

President E. W. Zirkle, NJ
 Pres-elect Bob R. Hillman, ID
 1st Vice Pres H. M. Chaddock, MI
 2nd Vice Pres M. Lea, LA
 3rd Vice Pres R. E. Frost, CA
 Past Pres R. H. McCapes, CA
 Secretary J. L. Alley, AL
 Treasurer H. W. Towers, DE

Information for contacting these officers is available on the USAHA web page (www.usaha.org) or by calling the Association office at (804) 285-3210

There is no royal road to anything. One thing at a time, and all things in succession. That which grows slowly endures.

Josiah Gilbert Holland

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The "USAHA" newsletter seeks to provide information of interest and use to the membership. We would appreciate your critique of our efforts and ideas for future editions. We may publish all or parts of your letter.

Send letters to: Editor, "USAHA"
 27224 Meadowbrook Dr., Davis,
 CA 95616

telephone & fax (530) 756-4284
RMCCAPES@compuserve.com

Reunion of Brucellosis Workers

All who have worked in the Bang's Program Urged to Attend

by Claude Barton

Plans are progressing for the reunion of brucellosis workers during the annual meeting of USAHA in Birmingham, Alabama, Oct. 19-26, 2000. The time is drawing near for individuals to make specific plans to attend.



Claude Barton

The reunion will be an evening affair and will include a meal. Anyone who has been connected with the brucellosis program during the years is invited to attend.

As the time draws near, it is important that all individuals who have participated in the brucellosis program be made aware of this event. Dr. Jere Dick and Jan Huber are contacting the current leadership of each state in the eastern and western regions of the country respectively. Dr. J. Lee Alley's office is developing and maintaining the list of possible participants.

Anyone knowing the location of former workers should notify Drs. Dick or Huber or, Dr. Alley's office directly.

Alley's address is: State Veterinarian, Alabama State Agriculture Department, P.O. Box 3336, Montgomery, AL 36109-0336

(334) 240-7255 telephone

(334) 223-7352 fax

alagai01@agri-ind.state.al.us

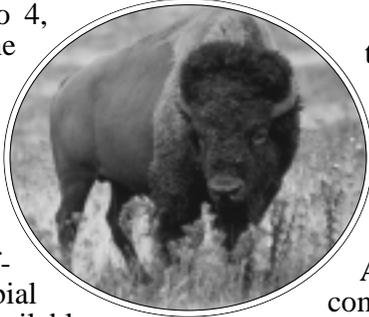
Letters to the Editor

www.usaha.org
webpage update

January 22, 2000

Dear Dr. McMapes:

I read with interest the Op-Ed piece by Governor Racicot entitled It's Time for a "Misinformation Eradication Program" on Yellowstone Bison and Brucellosis, USAHA Vol. 26, No 4, December 1999. The Governor's statement that the disease is "incurable in humans" dates from the pre-antibiotic era. Fortunately, a number of highly effective antimicrobial drugs are now available with which to cure brucellosis in humans. Come on Governor....no more "misinformation" please!



Sincerely,

Edward J. Young, M.D.
10814 Paulwood Drive
Houston, TX 77071

Brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area

National Research Council
Washington, D.C. 1998
186 pages

National Academy Press
(<http://www.nap.edu>)
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USAHA

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February 25, 2000

Dear Dr. McCapes,

Thank you for sharing the letter to the editor from Edward J. Young, M.D. in response to a recent article I wrote for your newsletter.

In 1998, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt commissioned the National Academy of Sciences Report entitled, "Brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area." A report review committee consisting of members of the Institute of Medicine, the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Academy of Engineering approved the study. According to these experts, treatment of human brucellosis involves four - six weeks of antibiotic therapy, which carries the possibility of toxicity in some patients. Cure is not ensured, especially in chronic disease, which can be lifelong.

In researching Dr. Young's statement, I discovered that he is the country's leading expert in brucellosis in humans. In on-going communication between representatives of the State of Montana, Centers for Disease Control and APHIS, which have taken place over the years, this new information has not been presented.

I appreciate Dr. Young's insight and will update our information to include the fact that brucellosis is now considered to be curable. I have also requested updated information from veterinarians at the CDC in regards to a cure for brucellosis in cattle and bison.

Sincerely,

Marc Racicot, Governor
State of Montana
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620-0801

by Larry Mark, USAHA Webmaster

e-mail address: webmaster@usaha.org

As of April 1, 2000, we've had 18,400 visitors since our webpage opened 2 years ago and we're on track to hit the 25,000-mark by the time we get to Birmingham!



Larry Mark

Responses to all but a couple of the 1999 resolutions have now been posted and the 1999 proceedings are now complete.

But the big news for our website is an "intranet" section for members only! We're using a commercial service that's free (they get their money through advertisements) but I think it will get what we want to do - and more - in terms of setting up a private site where we can post material that only selected individuals can access. We can have multiple sites, and what I envision is one main site <http://USAHA.intranets.com> for all USAHA members and then additional sites for individual committees.

For example, I've set up <http://usaha-johnes.intranets.com> as a place members of the Johnes Disease Committee can use to post reports, schedule events or exchange information without the rest of the world looking in.

Here are some of the features:

- Group announcements - you can add or edit
- The calendar - you can add or edit items
- Group members -- You can get the entire list or "find" by name (and use that name to send an e-mail message)
- Group contacts - you can add or list or "find" by name

19 Western States Object To Dunn's Threat Over Yellowstone

State Veterinarians ask USDA Undersecretary to reconsider 12/99 letter to Montana's Governor Marc Racicot

On December 13, 1999 USDA Undersecretary Michael V. Dunn signed a 14-page letter directed to Marc Racicot, Governor of Montana.

The purpose of the letter was to give 30-days notice to Montana of the federal government's intent to withdraw from its current Memorandum of Understanding with the State for joint preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement preferred alternative for a long-term bison management plan. It stated that continuing efforts to arrive at a joint State-Federal plan with Montana would not be fruitful at this time.

The text of the letter included reasons for taking this action and stated the federal government intended to proceed with the EIS modified preferred alternative plan without agreement with Montana.



Included in the letter was the following paragraph:

"2. D. i. - APHIS Assistance to Montana if Other States Threaten Sanctions.

First, under the modified preferred alternative, APHIS would aggressively

intervene should other states threaten or impose sanctions on Montana for actions taken in conformance with the modified preferred alternative. Should a state threaten or impose sanctions, APHIS would immediately consult with the State threatening or imposing such sanctions to convince the State that such sanctions are not necessary and are not scientifically supportable. Should the State persist and impose sanctions or refuse to withdraw sanctions already imposed, APHIS would work with Montana to pursue all legal remedies against such State, including seeking an injunction against any such sanction. For example, APHIS, with Montana's concurrence, would be willing to recommend that the U.S. Department of Justice to seek an injunction against a State imposing such a sanction."

In a March 29, 2000 letter to Dunn, the Western States Livestock Health Association asked him to reconsider item 2. D. i. of his December letter.

(See letter below).

*Western States Livestock Health Association
March 29, 2000*

*The Honorable Michael Dunn
Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs
United States Department of Agriculture*

Dear Undersecretary Dunn:

The Western States Livestock Health Association is an organization of state animal health officials of the nineteen western states who cooperate on issues of animal health and disease control. At our March 16, 2000, meeting, we had the opportunity to thoroughly review your December 13, 1999, letter to Montana's Governor Marc Racicot.

Beyond all issues regarding the specifics of disease control, issues discussed in item D. section 1. of your letter were particularly disturbing and alarming. The stated intention for APHIS to "aggressively intervene should other states

threaten or impose sanctions on Montana ..." including "to recommend that the U.S. Department of Justice to seek an injunction ..." moves to destroy the longstanding cooperative relationship between state and federal animal health officials.

"... item D. i..... moves to destroy the longstanding cooperative relationship between state and federal animal health officials."

Most state animal health officials have, through the years, fought in the trenches as well as in state regulatory divisions, in partnership with APHIS officials, to successfully control and eradicate many animal diseases. In all current and past animal health programs, we state officials have been in the best position to analyze, evaluate, and assist our states' animal industries in mitigating disease risks.

The stated intent for APHIS to initiate legal action against us

fails to recognize this contribution, our credibility in our states, and our responsibilities under state statutes. Additionally, this approach seriously undermines the basic thesis of state-federal cooperative disease control programs.

We urgently request that you reconsider such direction for APHIS. Due to the gravity of this issue, we are anticipating a personal response by April 15, 2000. All members of WSLHA have unanimously agreed to this letter.

Sincerely,

*Andrew A. Clark, DVM
President, Western States Livestock Health Association (WSLHA)*

Note - The WSLHA consists of the State Veterinarians of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming

cc: Dr. Craig Reed, Administrator, APHIS

Dr. Alfonso Torres, Deputy Administrator, Veterinary Services

USAHA visits Capitol

from page 1

with the USAHA contingent at the hotel conference room.

The Committee also traveled by the Metro rapid transit system to Riverdale, MD to meet with personnel located in the APHIS building there.

The Government Relations Committee is made up of the USAHA Board of Directors, the presidents of each of the five Association Districts and the representative of the AVMA. USAHA Committee chairs are also invited to attend this meeting.

On one afternoon, members of the USAHA contingent visited the offices of several legislators to discuss issues of concern to the Association.

Generally, organization and agency personnel provided briefings and presentations to the Committee on priority issues, many of which were identified prior to the meeting.

Representatives from the following agencies and organizations met with the Committee over the four-day period:

- Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC).
- American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).
- USDA, Animal and Plant Inspection Services (APHIS).
- USDA, Agriculture Research Service) ARS.
- USDA, Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS).
- FDA, Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM).
- FDA, Center for Food Safety and Nutrition (CFSAN).
- Conservation Fund.
- Animal Agriculture Coalition (AAC).

The USAHA Board of Directors met separately three times during the visit to conduct Association business. Bruce Akey, President of AAVLD, and Pat Blan-

Melcher presented first USAHA Honorary Membership certificate

by Dick McCapes

USAHA president Ernie Zirkle presented the Association's first Honorary Member certificate to Dr. John Melcher of Washington, DC during a February 16, 2000 banquet in Greenbelt, MD.

Dr. Melcher is a former U.S. Senator from Montana.

The Association's Executive Committee unanimously approved Honorary Membership status for Melcher during the October 1999 annual meeting.

The February banquet in Greenbelt was held as part of the annual meeting of the USAHA Committee on Government Relations in the Washington area. Those present included many



John Melcher accepts USAHA Honorary Membership Certificate from Ernie Zirkle.

USAHA members and representatives of several federal agencies and organizations with common interest in animal health.

The certificate cited his continuing valuable service and advice to the Association on governmental relations and our country's legislative system.

The following day, Dr. Melcher discussed the legislative process with the Committee, hosted members to a luncheon held in a private room in the the Capitol building and gave a personal tour of the Senate and House chambers.

A most enjoyable and interesting opportunity. John, it's great to have you aboard!

chard, Vice President also met with the Board. The two associations discussed ideas for improving the joint annual meeting and other issues.

On one evening, APHIS, VS again made the arrangements for the traditional no-host banquet, inviting representatives from all of the agencies and organizations to attend. The get together was held at the Sir Walter Raleigh restaurant and was a very pleasant affair. A great meal and a fine opportunity for all to visit and to get to know one another.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the USAHA's first Honorary Member certificate by president Ernie Zirkle to Dr. John Melcher (see photograph and story above).

Those interested in the details of presentations and briefings made to the Committee can access the report of the Committee on

Government Relations on the USAHA's webpage (www.usaha.org) as soon as it is posted. It should be completed in the not too distant future. Look under Committees.

Centerfold ... pages 6 and 7, is a montage of photographs taken throughout ... meeting

The centerfold of this newsletter, pages 6 and 7, is a montage of photographic images taken throughout the four day meeting in Washington, D.C.

Contact Mike Chaddock for additional information.

The wiseth mind hath something yet to learn.

George Santayana

Dear viewers:

- Pages #6 and #7 of the April issue of the “USAHA” newsletter have been combined into a single 11”X 17” document that contains a montage of photographs.

This was done in order to have a full two-page centerfold on the print version.

- To view pages #6 and #7 on your screen, be sure you download both PDF documents associated with this issue of the newsletter.
- In order to print the entire photographic montage as a single document, your printer must be able to handle 11”X17” paper.

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USAHA Communications Group Meets in Richmond

"Technology volunteers" needed by Association

by Dick McCapes

The newly formed USAHA Communications Group held its second meeting on February 23, 2000, at the Association's office in Richmond, VA. Its first meeting was held in November 1999.



Communications Group - from left: Linda Ragland, Bruce Akey, Larry Mark, Dick McCapes, Matt Cummings and Pat Campbell (photo 11/99)

Members of the Group are:

- Linda Ragland, Association office administrator, Richmond, VA.
- Bruce Akey, committee chair and president, AAVLD, Richmond, VA.
- Larry Mark, webmaster and press officer, Springfield, VA.
- Dick McCapes, newsletter editor, Davis, CA.
- Matt Cummings, computer system and software provider, Richmond, VA.
- Pat Campbell, prepress service provider, Richmond, VA.

The purpose of the Communications Group is to discuss and implement better ways to facilitate communication between and among USAHA's internal and external constituencies.

Issues pertaining to publication of the proceedings of the annual meeting were discussed, including editing and proofing, assigning re-

sponsibility for submission of scientific papers in a timely manner and posting on the web page.

Tentative plans were made to turn over the page layout and prepress functions pertaining to the electronic and print publication of the newsletter to Pat Campbell. A new editor will be brought aboard by the end of the year who will

be responsible for developing newsletter content and oversight of the prepress activities.

The desirability for all USAHA electronic and print documents to have a standard "look and feel" was discussed.

Adobe Systems, Inc.'s Portable Document Format (PDF) will be used for many of the Association's electronic publications

The desirability of developing a web-based directory of the Association membership was discussed and progress on implementation of intranet technology to facilitate Association activities was reported on.

A bid for providing the Association with a Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) internet connection was reviewed. The availability of this broadband service would allow the Association to host its webpage on its own computer system and would enable the Association to provide enhanced email service to members.

Because USAHA is volunteer-based, an increased number of "technology volunteers" will be needed to fully exploit these new opportunities.

Editor Sought for "USAHA" Newsletter

Dick McCapes, volunteer editor of the quarterly "USAHA" newsletter for the past five and one-half years, announced he will be stepping aside by December 31st.

A new editor will be sought for the position following discussion and development of a replacement plan by the leadership of the Association.

The current editor is responsible for development of the written and graphic content of the publication and all prepress functions, including computerized page-layout and electronic transmission of the finished publication to the printer and USAHA webmaster.

Plans are underway to hand off the prepress functions to a service provider by the end of the year. This would permit a new volunteer editor to concentrate on content functions.

Individuals interested in serving as editor can contact President Ernie Zirkle and President-elect Bob Hillman.

Book Review

by Dick McCapes

"Reflections On A Ravaged Century" by Robert Conquest and published by W. W. Norton & Company.

Have you ever wondered how and why the peoples of Germany and Russia embraced such horrific ideas as Nazism, Communism and the totalitarian state? Could it happen again?

Robert Conquest, historian and Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, provides meticulous and elegant insights to these and other questions utilizing the events of the past century as his laboratory. Simply a great book!

VS Sets Future Directions

from page 1

VS gave input during a "futuring" process. From this, a strategic plan was developed. It is available on the VS web site (www.aphis.usda.gov). Broadly, its four major goals are:

1) Safeguard the United States from the occurrence of adverse animal health events.



The National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa, provides quality laboratory support for animal health regulatory programs.

Farmers, business people, breeders, traders, and equestrians import animals, animal products and veterinary biologics from around the world. VS plays a vital role in this trade by preventing foreign animal diseases from entering the country. It regulates the importation of live animals, animal products and germ plasm (semen and embryos), inspects and tests animals, and conducts highly sophisticated risk assessments and analysis to prevent foreign animal diseases from entering the country. The safeguarding infrastructure includes the National Center for Import and Export in Riverdale, Maryland, which negotiates import protocols and issues import permits, and VS veterinarians and animal health technicians stationed at most border crossing points and ports of entry.

Although it has been more than 25 years since any major animal disease has been introduced into the United States, NAFTA and GATT trade agreements and a global environment have height-

ened concern and our strategic analyses indicate we must remain vigilant to ensure continued success.

2) Monitor the health and productivity of the U.S. animal populations and monitor the health-related attributes of animal products and veterinary biologics.

Emergencies are more than the outbreak of only foreign animal diseases. An unusual presentation of a disease in this country can suddenly and negatively impact the public's purchasing decisions as well as importation decisions made by other countries.

VS monitors foreign animal health and maintains an extensive domestic surveillance system to prevent incursions and quickly detect and diagnose outbreaks of exotic diseases. VS has been successful in its eradication

campaigns against exotic Newcastle disease (1974), hog cholera (1978) and avian influenza (1984). In September 1999, it successfully isolated a virus from tissues of a crow from the New York city area. This virus was later identified as West Nile Virus (WNV) and confirmed as the cause of a human encephalitis outbreak. At the request of New York State, VS sent an early response team to assist in investigating the cases.

The National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) began nearly 20 years ago to collect, analyze, and disseminate data on animal health, management and production across the country.

When Japan was experiencing an E.coli 0157:H outbreak, the results of a NAHMS swine study helped reassure the Japanese market that U.S. pork was safe.

A major objective identified during the strategic planning process is to develop a comprehensive integrated and coordinated approach to animal health monitoring and surveillance that provides adequate information for all needs (emerging issues, trade risk assessment, regionalization, control and certification programs). A cornerstone of this approach will be animal identification.

3) Enhance the status of U.S. animal populations by responding to new or emerging threats and by managing and controlling those already identified.

One of our prime achievements in the past half-century has been the near eradication of brucellosis. Now, pseudorabies is close to being eradicated thanks to a successful accelerated program, and plans are in place to accelerate the scrapie and tuberculo-



VS lent the expertise of its Regional Emergency Animal Disease Eradication Organizations (READEO) teams to North Carolina to supervise removal and incineration of pigs and poultry that were killed during Hurricane Floyd.

sis eradication programs.

Keeping the United States free of foreign animal diseases has become even more important as global boundaries shrink. Rapid detection is crucial to combating

VS Sets Future Directions from page 7

foreign animal diseases and threats to our animal population and products, including those related to bioterrorism.

APHIS has partnered with state animal health officials, industry representatives and veterinary practitioners to develop a national emergency management system. A state-of-the-art

Emergency Management Operations Center (EMOC) will open this year in Riverdale, MD, with the technical capability to quickly and effectively provide a unified response structure and national leadership. Additionally, two VS Regional Emergency Animal Disease Eradication Organizations (the response arm of the emergency management system) are trained to fight exotic diseases anywhere in the United States.

The new center, using APHIS-wide staffing, will be capable of managing two outbreaks at once, and be able to respond to other related emergencies. How well VS emergency services can work was evident with Hurricane Floyd last September. Once the request came from North Carolina, VS dispatched a response team to assess the situation and report on resources needed for animal relief efforts, and the emergency management system went into action.

Our strategy to make progress toward our goal is to continue pursuing funds required to detect, eradicate and control diseases and build a dynamic emergency management system.

4) Expand the domestic and international marketability of U.S. animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics.

VS participation at the negotiating tables during bilateral and quadrilateral meetings and partici-

pation in standard setting discussions with the Office of International Epizootics (OIE) continues to enhance trade opportunities for U.S. products, and ensure the continued health of U.S. animal agriculture.

Strategic initiatives include working to align efforts in international negotiations and harmonization with up-to-date ways of doing business in the electronic age in order to assist U.S. animal industries.

We will take advantage of new technologies in our efforts to provide technical assistance and to encourage international trade.

Additionally, we will provide disease-status certification programs to verify that livestock and poultry are free from diseases that are of concern domestically and inter-

nationally, and provide production process auditing and certification at the farm level to improve the quality and safety of animal-derived food products.

VS also plans to improve the veterinary accreditation program to provide education to accredited veterinarians who play a vital role in the export market.

In the 100 plus years of our existence we have made much progress in the animal health field. In this new century we are moving from a strong regulatory, eradication and control organization to one that places a high value on partnering and providing advisory and assistance services to animal industries and other stakeholders. Our strategies to meet the demands of the external environment in the long run include taking steps to help U.S. animal agriculture producers position themselves in the global market by maintaining healthy animal populations; integrating and focusing on monitoring and surveillance; building a dynamic emergency management system; and eradicating and controlling critical diseases.

Veterinary Services (VS) protects and improves the health, quality and marketability of our nation's animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics by:

- Preventing, controlling and/or eliminating animal diseases, and
- Monitoring and promoting animal health and productivity

www.usaha.org from page 3

• Group documents – add or list or "find" by title

In each of the intranet sites, there are one or more "administrators" who can set certain "permissions" – i.e., to add announcements, events, contacts, documents and group links and to send invitations to join. Right now, I've got the first four – adding announcements, events, contacts and documents – set for everyone and the last two – adding group links and inviting additional people to join – limited to an administrator.

In addition to the common things on the site, each member can have his or her own private areas – with such things as tracking investments, having their own personal most-used links and a number of other things. Their "help" section seems to be very user friendly. And they're continually adding features.

I'm excited about this new tool and hope that many of you will join me in using it. You need the registration code (which I can supply) and then you set your own individual login and password. If you're interested, just send me an e-mail at the address above & I'll let you know how to sign up.

What else is new? Well, I'm working to expand our directory and hope in the near future to be able to post the e-mail address and phone/fax numbers for all members. Up to this point, we've only listed the office staff, regional delegates, allied organizations and the National Assembly.

Finally, I continue to expand the "Key Links" page – putting links to the "news" segments of different organizations – and adding State animal health web sites. But I know I'm still missing some of the latter, so if you don't see your state agency or diagnostic lab there, send me an e-mail with the URL & I'll add it.

President's Corner

from page 2

Working Group to address the issues as soon as possible with the hope that the information gathered will support Mike in dealing with the situation. Please see the announcement of the Group and its charges on page 8.

The Yellowstone National Park and brucellosis in bison issue has taken another turn. On February 4, Judge Lovell found that USDA and the Department of Interior could legally withdraw from the MOU. After the decision, all parties signed a seven-point stipulation agreement to work together informally to resolve remaining disputes regarding long-term bison management. If an agreement is not reached informally by April 24, 2000, the parties have agreed to engage in formal mediation with the assistance of a U.S. magistrate judge to be selected by District Judge Lovell.

Although I believe that the action to withdraw from the MOU was a deliberate attempt by the politicians in USDA (not scientists and program people at Riverdale) to force Montana into a decision their cattlemen could not live with, I hope a solution can be reached during these remaining mediations. We will put pertinent correspondence and documents on the web for all to see.

On February 22, I attended the Animal Agriculture Coalition Budget Briefing held downtown in the South Building. It was very disturbing to see what the continuation of several years of flat budgeting has done to the ability of Veterinary Services (VS) and International Services (IS) to maintain critical programs.

It is very obvious that the protection of our boundaries from FADs in this hemisphere is at best stretched to the breaking point, but to many who were there the program can only be considered

as grossly inadequate. IS has a maximum of \$2.8 million (slightly more than the appropriation for 1990) to spend to protect us from FMD/FAD. IS called a meeting of industry people in January to help determine how to spend a total of \$398,915 to prevent FMD/FAD into our boundaries from this hemisphere. This paltry sum is all that is left after salaries and other budget costs are removed from the total budget. The thrust of the meeting was to have stakeholders help establish priorities since there was not enough money to cover all needs.

It is truth very certain that, when it is not in our power to determine what is true, we ought to follow what is most probable.

Rene Descartes

VS is in just as bad shape. NVSL is \$1.6 million in the red at this time and does not have the staff to perform all the testing requested by states that have serious disease outbreaks. This deficit is in spite of the fact that they have been charging user fees for several years.

Bill Buisch, Acting Director of NVSL until the position is permanently filled, is currently surveying possible ways to correct the shortfall and will be seeking advice from state veterinarians and other users. I take exception to the fact that NVSL charges user fees and the Center for Veterinary Biologics Section (which does all the work to get products approved for the pharmaceutical industry) charges no fees. Where is the equity?

The National Animal Disease Surveillance System that was initiated several years ago is nowhere near the staffing and program projections that were to have been in place before now. This leaves us with the concerns of what happens if....?

Dick McCapes surveyed state veterinarians in 1996 to determine our confidence in the nation's

ability to handle an invasion of FAD. The results were disheartening and VS indicated they were going to aggressively address the issue. They devised plans that called for networking with FEMA, universities, states and others involved in the process. There was a renewed interest from all of us in helping to devise a program that we could have confidence in.

What has happened? Where are the upgraded guidelines for FAD? Where are the 12 emergency managers to help solidify the program? Where are the full-time READEO Directors? Where are additional training schedules for State VMOs? Where are the test exercises? Funding has not been forthcoming, projects have backed up, budgets have remained level, and cost-of-living increases for staff have reduced real dollars for the program. In addition, issues such as CSF to our south, BSE and, most recently, West Nile Fever have taken resources allocated for emergency and other programs.

The Animal Agriculture Coalition has done a lot of lobbying on the Hill and has made some very significant gains concerning the economic plight of VS, but the fact still remains that VS is grossly under-funded to meet their program goals and objectives.

There are no easy answers but if we, as state veterinarians, including myself, livestock owners, scientists and animal owners, informed members of the various budget and appropriation committees from our respective states of the importance of VS to our respective livestock industries, we would reinforce the work done by the AAC.

I know most of us have restrictions on lobbying legislators, but there are innovative ways to get the message across. We are simply going to have to address the issue at that level to get action. The very existence of Veterinary Services depends on us.

New TB/Wildlife Working Group Formed

Note: The following is the text of a letter from President Zirkle detailing the charge to members of the working group.

March 1, 2000

USAHA Working Group on Tuberculosis: Domestic Animal/Wildlife Interface

I. Background

Mycobacterium bovis was identified in the State of Michigan in 1994. Since that time feeder cattle, dairy cattle and captive cervids, along with wild-white tailed deer and many carnivorous species have been found to be infected. The State of Michigan and Federal agencies, after much surveillance, developed a long-range plan, which called for deer surveillance activity throughout the northeastern part of the state.

Deer surveillance during the 1999 – 2000 hunting season revealed more positive animals, three of which were outside the management zone. In addition, one new beef and dairy herd has been identified, which brings a total of five herds with tuberculosis infection. Epidemiological evidence attributes white tailed-deer as the source of these infections.

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) has long served as a science-based national forum for the eradication of tuberculosis from animals in the United States and for control of diseases in the nation's wildlife. The Association's Committee on Tuberculosis and Committee on Wildlife Diseases have addressed these issues over the years.

The USAHA is concerned about issues that are unique to the Michigan outbreak and is hereby appointing the USAHA Working Group on Tuberculosis: Domestic Animal/Wildlife Interface to address our concerns and aid in the development of strategies that will effectively address this livestock/wildlife disease interaction issue. This group will collect available scientific and epidemiological information to address the following as well as any other pertinent issues:

II. Immediate Short-Term Issues

- Determine if depopulation or other alternative methods are best for eradicating tuberculosis from a cattle herd in a state that has a very low incidence of infection. Consider also that tuberculo-

sis has almost been eradicated from the entire United States.

- Establish the agency (or agencies) that has responsibility for control of tuberculosis in wildlife.

- Determine recommendations for eradicating or controlling tuberculosis in white-tailed deer in a manner compatible with the nation's tuberculosis eradication program in domestic animals.

- Assess the potential human health threat if tuberculosis is allowed to spread unchecked in a wild white-tailed deer population.

- Assess the animal welfare and humane impacts on a deer population if tuberculosis is allowed to spread unchecked.

- Outline what is known about the epidemiology of the spread of tuberculosis infection within white-tailed deer populations and between white tail deer and cattle populations.

- Identify what, if any, role the raccoon, other carnivorous animals and humans might play in transmission.

- Identify the threat of tuberculosis in a dairy or beef herd to human health.

- Determine whether states bordering Michigan, the entire North Central region, or all states should have active surveillance for tuberculosis in wildlife.

- Assess the potential impact on international trade if the disease is not quickly eradicated from cattle herds.

- Assess the potential impact on Michigan industries if the disease is not quickly eradicated.

- Determine what effects indemnifying for loss of income plus payment for care and feed prior to depopulation, in addition to replacement costs, will have on the nation's tuberculosis eradication program.

III. More Long-Range Issues

- What tools may be available for continued long term surveillance and eradication.

- What role could vaccination play in the nation's tuberculosis eradication program and when will a vaccine be available for cattle and deer?

- With an increasing awareness of the occurrence of livestock diseases in wildlife, it is critical that ways be developed to prevent the spread of

disease through the domestic animal/livestock interface. The Working Group on Tuberculosis: Domestic Animal/Wildlife Interface should make recommendations for how this interface can be surveilled, and separation enforced, to minimize spread of disease from deer to cattle and vice versa.

IV. Composition of the Working Group

The Chair of the Committee on Tuberculosis and the Chair of the Committee on Wildlife Diseases have agreed to co-chair the working group.

- Co-Chairs: Dennis Thompson and Michael Miller

- John Clifford

- John Fischer

- Tom Hagerty

- Bob Myer

- Gary Weber

- Diana Whipple

The Co-Chairs may select additional members as they deem appropriate to address the charge. We strongly recommend that there be no more than 10 members on the Working Group.

V. Administration of the Working Group

The Working Group is directed to prepare their final report for the president of the United States Animal Health Association. The president will, in turn, determine how the report will be utilized by the Association.

The Working Group is asked to consult, as necessary, with members of appropriate USAHA committees, including the Committees on Tuberculosis and Wildlife Diseases, and with recognized experts throughout the nation.

The USAHA office will provide the following support:

1. Web page – The USAHA Webmaster, Larry Mark, will arrange for agreed upon web page and email support for the activities of the Working Group.

2. Publication of the final report – The USAHA office will arrange, in consultation with the Working Group Co-chairs, to have the final digitized report of the Working Group transformed into a standard USAHA PDF (Portable Document Format) document suitable for print and electronic distribution, including posting on the Association webpage.