UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
2015 RESOLUTION
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RESOLUTION NUMBER: **3 and 7 Combined** **APPROVED**

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON Import-Export**
COMMITTEE ON BLUETONGUE AND RELATED ORBIVIRUSES

SUBJECT MATTER: **Bluetongue, National Strategy for Animal Exports**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The importance of bluetongue and related orbivirus infections to the United States livestock industry was the focus of a recent United States Department of Agriculture Gap Analysis workshop available at:

http://www.ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/Program/103/OrbivirusGapAnalysisWorkshopFinalFeb2014.pdf

The global range of bluetongue virus has expanded recently, notably:

- The discovery since 1998 of at least ten new serotypes of bluetongue virus in the Southeast indicates that previously exotic viruses now are entering the United States, likely from the Caribbean Basin. Some of these viruses have now spread beyond the southeastern United States.

- The emergence of numerous serotypes of bluetongue virus into Europe since 1998 has been associated with extensive clinical disease in both sheep and cattle. Climate change is postulated to have played a role in the spread of bluetongue viruses into Europe through its impact on the insect vector, particularly in the Mediterranean Basin.

Endemic bluetongue virus infection has resulted in the imposition of non-tariff trade barriers to the international export of ruminant livestock from the United States. At present, there is no coordinated surveillance for bluetongue virus in the United States to detect potential introductions of new virus serotypes or document their spread. Without comprehensive surveillance it will be difficult or impossible for the United States to develop an internationally accepted regionalization strategy to facilitate livestock exports.

RESOLUTION:

Given the historic and ongoing negative impact of endemic Bluetongue Virus and Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease Virus infections on the export of ruminant livestock from the United States, the United States Animal Health Association requests that the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services facilitate the development of a national strategy for animal exports with consideration of regionalization supported by a national surveillance program as prescribed by the World Organization for Animal Health's (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health Code chapter 8.3. The surveillance should include the identification of specific circulating serotypes**.**

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the U.S. Animal Health Association and appreciates the opportunity to respond. VS' Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health has developed a proposal for a bluetongue

virus (BTV) pilot surveillance study. The intent of this study is to assess the current ecology, prevalence, and distribution of BTV and its Culicoides vector in the United States through surveillance in accordance with the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code chapter 8.3. The study should provide a strong foundation and methodology for multiple products, all of which will help in establishing a national export strategy and program. The proposal is being reviewed and discussed within Veterinary Services.

VS will explore funding options and timelines for implementation. Further, VS is consulting relevant field, State, laboratory, and industry personnel to assess available resources and strategies for implementation.