
RESOLUTION NUMBER: 1 APPROVED

**SOURCE: USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC
LABORATORY AND VETERINARY WORKFORCE**

**SUBJECT MATTER: VETERINARY PUBLIC PRACTICE AWARENESS AND
PROMOTION**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

There have been several workforce studies over the last few years addressing the future of veterinary medicine and the critical role the profession plays in meeting societal needs, and the additional challenges the profession faces such as increased student debt, mental health and wellness, career transition, and retention in the profession. Most citizens of the nation are not aware of all the significant contributions veterinarians make to public health. To meet the increasing costs of veterinary education and the decreasing federal and state funding to support that education, veterinary colleges are increasing tuition and increasing class sizes in an attempt to meet these financial challenges.

A National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report from 2013 entitled “Workforce Needs in Veterinary Medicine” states that most of these students will likely practice companion animal medicine, and that “these actions will increase the supply of companion animal practitioners, the largest group of veterinary practitioners, at a time of uncertain demand for companion animal services.” The report further states that “the veterinary profession should expand its capacity to address complex global problems, such as those associated with food security, by encouraging interactions between United States veterinary graduates and other disciplines and cultures, particularly in the developing world, where the profession has the opportunity to leverage its expertise in One Health and lead advances in food animal husbandry welfare, water safety and security, and the health of wildlife and ecosystems.” Society must be convinced, however, that investment in veterinary medicine is imperative. The study states that “the public, policymakers, and even medical professionals are frequently unaware of how veterinary medicine fundamentally supports both animal and human health and well-being” and that “broadening the public’s understanding will require commitment by veterinary leadership, the academe, and practitioners to develop and promote the profession as one that offers diverse career paths with many different niches for veterinarians, ranging from traditional companion animal practice to public and private sector positions in biomedicine, animal research, wildlife, the environment, global food production, food safety and security, and public health.”

An Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) report of 2008 stated, “To safeguard the US economy, public health, and food supply, there must be recruitment and preparation of additional veterinarians into careers in public health, food systems, biomedical research, diagnostic laboratory investigation, pathology, epidemiology, ecosystem health, and food animal practice.” Conclusion 1 of the NAS report states in part “societal needs for veterinary expertise are substantial and growing, but the potential contributions of veterinary medicine are not realized because appropriate positions in relevant sectors are lacking.” Although there are many reasons why there has not been adequate public sector financial support of veterinary education and opportunities, one clear reason is the lack of awareness of the public and decision-makers, and indeed many early career veterinary students, as to the value, skills, and broad interdisciplinary capabilities of veterinarians. To enhance the ability of the veterinary profession to better meet societal needs and to provide more opportunities for employment for veterinarians, it is critically important to increase public awareness of the skills, abilities, and broad-based training of veterinarians.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) strongly urge the American Veterinary Medical Association to develop and implement an action plan to lead a public relations campaign with a goal to raise public and professional awareness of the breadth of skills of veterinarians in diagnostic and regulatory medicine and the contribution of veterinary medicine to public, animal and environmental health. This campaign would be similar to the public outreach campaign “Partners for Healthy Pets”, which has elevated public awareness of the value of private practitioners. Such a campaign could be called “Partners for a Healthy Planet”, “Partners for a Healthy Society”, or some such similar title. The resulting review and recommendations for consideration should be provided to each of the contributing organizations prior to the 2019 Annual Meeting of the USAHA and AAVLD.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 2 APPROVED

SOURCE: USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

**SUBJECT MATTER: AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY: FISH HEALTH SECTION
“SUGGESTED PROCEDURES FOR THE DETECTION AND
IDENTIFICATION OF CERTAIN FINFISH AND SHELLFISH
PATHOGENS (BLUE BOOK)”**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The American Fisheries Society – Fish Health Section’s “Suggested Procedures for the Detection and Identification of Certain Finfish and Shellfish Pathogens (Blue Book)” manual was created to address salmonid pathogens. This manual may not address a changing aquaculture sector and is being used in a way not originally intended. For example, it is being used by states to regulate aquatic animal health testing, inspection, and movement.

The American Fisheries Society – Fish Health Section has begun a process to evaluate whether to make changes to the “Blue Book” and has approved the establishment of an ad-hoc committee to gather information. As the aquaculture industry is expected to grow dramatically in the United States, there is an opportunity to provide improved guidance to a broader range of stakeholders.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association encourages the American Fisheries Society – Fish Health Section to complete a re-evaluation of the “Suggested Procedures for the Detection and Identification of Certain Finfish and Shellfish Pathogens (Blue Book)” in consideration of its use by the aquaculture sector as well as by fisheries.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 3 APPROVED

SOURCE: USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE

**SUBJECT MATTER: COMMERCIAL AQUACULTURE HEALTH PROGRAM
STANDARDS**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Commercial Aquaculture Health Program Standards (CAHPS) were initiated by the National Aquaculture Association and developed with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2014. The standards set forth a model framework for the health of commercially farmed aquatic animals. CAHPS recognized and built upon current activities and existing guidelines for health of aquatic animals by establishing uniform standards for United States (US) farmed aquatic animal health and movement.

The United States Animal Health Association applauds the efforts of USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for working with the National Aquaculture Association to develop the CAHPS. We believe that the program must further evolve to benefit commercial aquaculture especially with regards to national and international trade. The effectiveness and success of the program requires the cooperation of not only industry but also state and federal entities including the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association encourages the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to continue to work with industry, state authorities for aquaculture/aquatic animal health, and other entities to explore viable, nationally and internationally recognized strategies to implement the Commercial Aquaculture Health Program Standards.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 4 Combined with 8, 12, 17, 21 and 37 APPROVED

**SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL HEALTH
SURVEILLANCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS
USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON NAHLN
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AND EMERGING DISEASES
COMMITTEE ON SWINE
COMMITTEE ON GLOBAL ANIMAL HEALTH AND TRADE**

**SUBJECT MATTER: AFRICAN SWINE FEVER (ASF) SURVEILLANCE
PROGRAM AND TISSUES FOR OFFICIAL ASF TESTING
IN NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY
NETWORK LABORATORIES**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

African Swine Fever (ASF) virus is highly contagious (for swine; people are not affected) and can spread rapidly in swine populations. ASF virus can be transmitted to swine by ticks, direct contact, fomites (including vehicles, feed, and equipment), or consumption of uncooked pork. Other bloodsucking insects such as mosquitoes and biting flies may also transmit the virus mechanically.

ASF has a clinical predilection for the macrophage. Post mortem clinical indications include splenomegaly and swollen and hemorrhagic lymph nodes. At this time, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved only whole blood and tonsil for official Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing.

The National Pork Board (NPB) and the Swine Health Information Center (SHIC) have funded a negative cohort study to validate ASF nucleic acid detection by PCR performed on swine oral fluids. The NPB, the SHIC, and USDA are funding the positive cohort study needed to complete the validation of oral fluid testing.

There is no vaccine or treatment currently available for ASF, and it is unlikely that an effective vaccine will become available to aid in the control of an outbreak. This increases the importance of rapid detection and aggressive measures to stamp out infected herds. Unlike Foot and Mouth Disease and Classical Swine Fever, for which effective vaccines exist at this time, there is no potential to use vaccination to suppress an outbreak of ASF before entering the final phase of disease eradication.

ASF virus isolates vary in virulence from highly pathogenic strains that cause near 100% mortality to low-virulence isolates that can be difficult to diagnose. An outbreak of high virulence ASF virus will likely be detected sooner and be easier to trace and stamp out. In the absence of an effective surveillance program, low virulence strains may become widespread before detection and will be more difficult to trace based on clinical signs alone.

The USDA has no formal active ASF surveillance program in the US. Currently, USDA allows an official ASF PCR test to be done only on whole blood submitted to the National Animal Health Laboratory Network veterinary diagnostic laboratories (VDLs). The Iowa State University (ISU) VDL reports that fewer than 200 whole blood samples have been submitted from approximately 50,000 diagnostic case investigations into clinically ill swine that involved the submission of a case history and tissues for histopathological evaluation by a diagnostic pathologist at the ISU VDL, over the course of the past 5 years.

The USDA “Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) Investigation Manual” (FAD PReP Manual 4-0) (2017) lists whole blood, tonsil, spleen, and lymph nodes as specimens for collection during ASF investigations.

The state pork producer associations of Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin recognize the need for an effective ASF surveillance program as a key element for protection of the United States swine herd. Additionally, they support the approval of additional tissues for official ASF testing.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association and American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians urge the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to immediately begin an active formal African Swine Fever (ASF) surveillance program in the United States and approve tonsil, spleen, and lymph nodes as additional tissues for official ASF testing in the National Animal Health Laboratory Network laboratories.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 5 Combined with 9, 13, 18, 22, and 36 APPROVED

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL HEALTH
SURVEILLANCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS
USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON NAHLN
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AND EMERGING DISEASES
COMMITTEE ON SWINE
COMMITTEE ON GLOBAL ANIMAL HEALTH AND TRADE**

SUBJECT MATTER: **ENHANCING CLASSICAL SWINE FEVER
SURVEILLANCE IN NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH
LABORATORY NETWORK DIAGNOSTIC
LABORATORIES**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Classical Swine Fever (CSF) is a highly contagious and economically significant viral disease of pigs. The severity of the illness varies with the strain of the virus, the age of the pig, and the immune status of the herd. Acute infections, which are caused by highly virulent isolates and have a high mortality rate in naive herds, are likely to be diagnosed rapidly. Infections with less virulent isolates, however, can be more difficult to recognize, particularly in older pigs. The range of clinical signs and similarity to other diseases can make classical swine fever challenging to diagnose.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) now has funding to use the tonsil as part of a routine surveillance program to detect CSF and is offering incentives to encourage practitioners to submit samples for surveillance.

Tests using the tonsil have been developed by the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (FADDL) at USDA's Plum Island Animal Disease Center to aid in detection and diagnosis of CSF. USDA's *Classical Swine Fever (CSF) Surveillance Procedure Manual* includes tonsil, tonsil scrapings, and nasal swabs as appropriate samples for CSF detection if collected and submitted properly. As an incentive for producers and veterinarians to submit tonsils, the USDA will credit the submitter with \$50 to be applied to the diagnostic workup for cases tested by one of the following National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratories: Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, New York, North Carolina, Texas, or Washington.

The National Pork Board (NPB) and the Swine Health Information Center (SHIC) have funded a negative cohort study to validate CSF nucleic acid detection by PCR performed on swine oral fluids. The NPB, the SHIC, and USDA are funding the positive cohort study needed to complete the validation of oral fluid testing.

The Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory reports that outside of the USDA CSF surveillance testing, over the past 5 years only 383 diagnostic tests were performed on porcine tonsils submitted with the approximately 50,000 diagnostic case investigations into clinically ill swine that involved the submission of a case history and tissues for histopathological evaluation by a diagnostic pathologist.

In the absence of an effective surveillance program that includes official CSF testing of tissues routinely submitted to the NAHLN laboratories for diagnostic case investigations, low virulence CSF strains may become widespread before detected.

The USDA "Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) Investigation Manual" (FAD PReP Manual 4-0) (2017) lists tonsil, spleen, and lymph nodes as specimens for collection during CSF investigations.

The state pork producer associations of Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin recognize the need for an effective CSF surveillance program as a key element for protection of the United States swine herd. To ensure effectiveness, they support the approval of additional tissues for official CSF testing.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians urge the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to approve tonsil, spleen, and lymph nodes as additional tissues for official Classical Swine Fever testing in the National Animal Health Laboratory Network laboratories.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 6 Combined with 10, 14, 19, 23, and 38 APPROVED

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL HEALTH
SURVEILLANCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS
USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON NAHLN
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AND EMERGING DISEASES
COMMITTEE ON SWINE
COMMITTEE ON GLOBAL ANIMAL HEALTH AND TRADE**

SUBJECT MATTER: **IMPLEMENTATION OF PSEUDORABIES VIRUS
DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID DETECTION (POLYMERASE
CHAIN REACTION) IN NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH
LABORATORY NETWORK VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC
LABORATORIES**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Pseudorabies virus (PRV) was eradicated from domestic swine in 2004. Vaccination was discontinued at that time, leaving the United States (US) herd vulnerable to infection and outbreak. Although eradicated from US domestic swine, PRV remains endemic in US feral swine.

A virulent strain of PRV in China, different than the strain eradicated from the US, emerged in Asia in 2011 where it is causing high morbidity and mortality. Research has shown that PRV could survive in feedstuffs under time, temperature, and humidity conditions mimicking those during shipment from China, revealing a potential path for introduction in the US.

Early detection of the virus and understanding the pathways of potential PRV transmission are critical to containing virus spread and preventing economic losses, should the virus arrive in the US. US PRV surveillance now relies solely on antibody detection.

Capable, rapid response will necessitate the use of nucleic acid detection (polymerase chain reaction - PCR) to enable detection of the virus in tissue samples sent to veterinary diagnostic labs (VDLs). The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) VDLs currently do not have the direct ability to detect PRV in submitted tissue samples with a validated PCR.

The National Pork Board's Swine Health Committee believes there is a rational urgency for the United States Department of Agriculture to prepare the NAHLN laboratories for the possibility of the re-emergence of PRV.

The state pork producer associations of Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin recognize the need for an effective PRV surveillance program as a key element for protection of the US swine herd and support the implementation of PRV Deoxyribonucleic Acid detection, proficiency testing in the NAHLN laboratories, and validation of their use with oral fluids.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians urge the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to actively pursue validating a Pseudorabies Virus (PRV) polymerase chain reaction assay for the detection of PRV Deoxyribonucleic Acid in swine oral fluids and other appropriate samples to be used in National Animal Health Laboratory Network laboratories as is currently being done with Foot and Mouth Disease Virus, Classical Swine Fever Virus, and African Swine Fever Virus.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 7 APPROVED

**SOURCE: AAVLD/USAHA COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL HEALTH
SURVEILLANCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

**SUBJECT MATTER: ADOPTION OF XML DATA STANDARD FOR EXCHANGE
OF ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATE OF VETERINARY
INSPECTION DATA**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) program relies heavily upon animal movement data contained in certificates of veterinary inspection (CVIs). Much of this data is digital or is being digitized. Effective use of these data, while minimizing the expense of repeat data entry, depends on the ability of dissimilar information systems to exchange CVI data in a standard format.

A robust marketplace of electronic CVIs (eCVIs) has emerged. In order to achieve a standard format that would have broad acceptance in this market, the Data Standards Subcommittee of the United States Animal Health Association Committee on Animal Health Surveillance and Information Systems used an industry consensus standard development process to create the "XML Data Standard for Exchange of eCVI Data." Version 1 of this standard underwent three years of trial use as a draft standard followed by an intense year of edits to resolve issues discovered during trial use. Version 2 of the standard is now available.

Effectiveness of a standard depends upon its adoption by a critical mass of data producer and consumer applications. Many of the most important ADT applications are implemented in United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services programs.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) urge the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to: 1) endorse version 2 of the AAVLD/USAHA XML Data Standard for exchange of electronic certificates of veterinary inspection (eCVI) data as the preferred means of eCVI data exchange, and; 2) as soon as is practicable, implement the standard as the primary means for export and import of eCVI data in all USDA, APHIS, VS applications that produce or use such data.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 11 Combined with 33 APPROVED

**SOURCE: USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL HEALTH
SUVEILLANCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS
COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON**

**SUBJECT MATTER: IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED TO THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S VETERINARY
SERVICES PROCESS STREAMLINING DATABASE**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Veterinary Services Process Streamlining (VSPS) database is one option accredited veterinarians may use to issue electronic Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (eCVIs). VSPS allows State Animal Health Official (SAHO) staff to log into the system to retrieve issued eCVIs. Additionally, VSPS allows for the retrospective entry of information from paper CVIs or other sources into the searchable database module (RetroCVI). Once logged in, SAHO staff must download one eCVI at a time. A request was made to VSPS staff to allow for bulk download of issued eCVIs and this request was confirmed by VSPS staff as submitted for review in September 2016. As of September 2018, no bulk download abilities for eCVIs have been integrated into VSPS.

VSPS has not been upgraded to allow either an XML eCVI output that meets the draft data standards developed by the Animal Health Surveillance and Information Systems' subcommittee on eCVI Data Standards, or the ability to upload XML data into the RetroCVI module used by some states. Consequently, VSPS currently does not have the ability to send data electronically to any SAHO-desired destination (e.g. CVI Central, SCS, StateVet.com, USAHerds, other state database, or designated email address).

Many states elect to have all traceability data, including all CVIs, accessible within their own offices and/or captured in their own databases. The current process for SAHO staff accessing VSPS issued eCVIs is extremely inefficient, creating a barrier to animal disease traceability and prohibiting advancements towards SAHOs data sharing goals. SAHOs are expected to provide summary information to USDA as part of accomplishment reports for Cooperative Agreements and for other specific queries, yet gathering the required information out of VSPS is often very inefficient and cumbersome. Separately, several SAHOs have suggested additional VSPS upgrades to USDA information technology helpdesk personnel. The upgrades are necessary to perform work more efficiently, but the suggestions have gone mostly unimplemented. The USDA Secretary of Agriculture Dr. Sonny Perdue has remarked that one of his

highest priorities is running an efficient agency that prioritizes customer service. It is past time that these concerns with VSPS are addressed in line with this priority.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Diagnosticians (AAVLD) urge the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services to immediately prioritize upgrading Veterinary Services Process Streamlining (VSPS) to better address the needs of state and federal animal health officials as well as accredited veterinarians utilizing the system. Upgrades should at minimum include 1) ability to download all issued electronic Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (eCVIs) for user specified issue dates in bulk, with each eCVI document as an individual PDF file; 2) upgrade VSPS to allow an eCVI XML output that meets, and continues to meet, the current eCVI standard developed by the Animal Health Surveillance and Information Systems' eCVI Data Standards Subcommittee; 3) expand the species list within VSPS to include all species included in the eCVI schema from the Animal Health Surveillance and Information Systems' eCVI Data Standards Subcommittee; 4) upgrade VSPS to allow acceptance of XML input, compatible with the previously referenced standard, from non-VSPS issued eCVIs into the VSPS RetroCVI module; 5) develop a mechanism for issued eCVIs, in PDF form and accompanying XML data, to be sent electronically to a designated email address or a state database (e.g. CVI Central, SCS, StateVet.com, USAHerds, or other state database); 6) allow export of RetroCVI data in bulk; and 7) allow searchability of data across both the eCVI and RetroCVI modules. All upgrades should be implemented in VSPS prior to the 2019 USAHA and AAVLD annual meetings. Additionally, resources should be budgeted both short term and long term to allow for necessary improvement, updates, and modifications to the system as is needed and requested by the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials and other traceability partners.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 15 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON EQUINE

SUBJECT MATTER: NATIONAL EQUINE COMMUNICATION CENTER

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The collaborative efforts of the American Association of Equine Practitioners, American Horse Council, United States Department of Agriculture, National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials, and other equine industry representatives, have led to establishment of the Equine Disease Communication Center (EDCC).

The EDCC has been extremely successful in providing real-time notification about infectious disease cases to the equine industry in North America. Additionally, the online educational resources of the EDCC have assisted horse owners, venue managers, industry associations, and state animal health officials in development of effective infectious disease management and communications plans. The EDCC has expanded its efforts into the development of a comprehensive database to capture case and incident data which will assist with the understanding of equine disease outbreaks in the United States.

The EDCC's current challenges are raising funds to guarantee continuation of the EDCC and continued reporting of equine disease incidents from state animal health officials.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture to continue to provide subject matter expertise and resume financial support to maintain the established Equine Disease Communication Center (EDCC). Furthermore, USAHA urges State Animal Health Officials to report confirmed cases of equine diseases reportable in their respective state to the EDCC.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 16 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON EQUINE

SUBJECT MATTER: EQUINE EUTHANASIA AND DISPOSAL

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

According to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA)'s National Animal Health Monitoring System 2015 Equine Study, the overall mortality rate for horses is 1.4%. The 2017 American Horse Council Economic Survey indicated a total of 7.2 million domestic horses in the United States. Based on these factors, there could be up to 101,000 horses euthanized by private practitioners annually which require disposal. Disposal options include burial, landfill, composting, incineration/cremation, and rendering. Environmental laws and local ordinances may eliminate all options except rendering or incineration. Recent changes in the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) policies restrict the use of animals euthanized with a chemical substance in animal foods. Furthermore, there is currently no set tolerance for pentobarbital, the most common equine euthanasia compound, in pet food. Any rendered product with detectable pentobarbital is considered adulterated by FDA and condemned. Thus, it is the responsibility of the renderer to take appropriate steps to ensure that the product does not contain pentobarbital. Based on the zero tolerance for pentobarbital, renderers across the country are challenged in accepting horse carcasses without knowledge of method of euthanasia.

Equine practitioners rely on the use of pentobarbital for a reliable, consistent, client friendly method of euthanasia. The elimination of rendering options for these carcasses is challenging the practitioner and owner. Additionally, practitioners must consider use of less client-friendly euthanasia agents or other chemical modalities that have limited research validation which have the potential to be prohibited by FDA in the future.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the Food and Drug Administration to develop formal, safe tolerance levels for residues of euthanasia and anesthetic agents in final product of rendering.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 20 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON SWINE

**SUBJECT MATTER: NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH MONITORING SYSTEM
SWINE 2020**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) is a program through which national studies are conducted through collaboration of multiple government agencies, producers and other industry representatives, academic institutions, and public and animal health professionals. These efforts are organized by a multidisciplinary group within the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health. This unit is composed of veterinary epidemiologists, livestock commodity specialists, statisticians, and technical support staff.

There have been five previous national swine studies (1990, 1995, 2000, 2006, and 2012) and each has provided estimates of critical industry benchmarks through a series of reports generated by surveys and biologic sample collections. All respondent identification is strictly confidential. The use of National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) list frames has allowed survey estimates generated by these studies to be extrapolated to over 90 percent of swine operations with more than 100 pigs. These estimates have documented management system progress in disease management and other factors related to swine health over the years. These studies have thus served to support export markets and have given researchers baseline estimates, biologic samples, and hypotheses to develop industry supported studies.

NAHMS data on antimicrobial use has provided baseline population estimates that can be used to compare use before and after recent Food and Drug Administration guideline implementation. Use estimates and bacterial isolate susceptibility test findings have been used at Congressional hearings on antimicrobial resistance. These national swine studies are unique in the world and provide an opportunity for a high level of cooperation between federal and industry sectors. Plans for the current study include collections of feces for traditional fecal pathogen isolation and sensitivity testing, and oral fluids collections. The latter can provide an incentive for participation and also affords opportunities for research such as validation of existing or new oral fluids tests.

Benefits that can be derived from past and future NAHMS surveys include: sound statistical representation of the industry; modeling of surveys to meet industry priorities;

clear communication of industry trends; resources for further research; estimates upon emerging pathogens and biological samples to be banked for future study.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, National Animal Health Monitoring System to coordinate planning, key objective development, timely reporting, and outreach activities for the 2020 National Swine Survey with industry organizations, producers, National Agricultural Statistics Service, and state animal health officials.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 24 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON DISEASES OF FARMED CERVIDAE

**SUBJECT MATTER: INVESTIGATION OF THE ROLE OF THE PRION PROTEIN
GENE IN CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE RESISTANCE
AND TRANSMISSION OF DISEASE**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The farmed cervidae industry supports research investigating Prion Protein genotypes that may be resistant to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and their impact on transmission of disease. This work could result in tools for breeders to use in selection for CWD resistant genotypes, and potentially provide options for conserving animal genetics in infected herds.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association encourages the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service to allocate funding for research efforts to identify Chronic Wasting Disease susceptibility in different cervid genotypes and the role they have on transmission of disease.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 25 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON DISEASES OF FARMED CERVIDAE

SUBJECT MATTER: CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE STRAIN EVALUATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The farmed cervidae industry and free ranging cervidae continue to be plagued with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) outbreaks and more needs to be known about the characteristics of the CWD prion.

The European Union uses the Western Blot test as a standard on every positive transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE). The Canadian Food Inspection Agency uses the Western Blot and immunohistochemistry (IHC) on every confirmed CWD positive sample. The United States uses IHC as the gold standard CWD test.

Scrapie is a TSE, as is CWD. Many different Scrapie strains have been found by using the Western Blot test. More work needs to be performed to evaluate whether there are different CWD strains.

There are epidemiological reasons why determining the different strains of CWD is necessary.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service to evaluate the potential diversity of Chronic Wasting Disease strains.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 26 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON DISEASES OF FARMED CERVIDAE

**SUBJECT MATTER: INVESTIGATE THE DUAL PATH PLATFORM AS AN
INDIVIDUAL ANIMAL TEST FOR INTERSTATE
COMMERCE OF FARMED CERVIDAE**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Advances in the science of tuberculosis (TB) testing have led to the development of antibody based blood tests. The licensing of the Dual Path Platform by United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Center for Veterinary Biologics in October 2012 for farmed cervids has decreased the need for handling of these species and increased the interest in TB testing by farmed cervid producers.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests that the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services evaluate the Dual Path Platform for use as an individual animal blood test in farmed cervidae for interstate commerce in the Tuberculosis Eradication Program.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 27 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON SHEEP, GOATS, AND CAMELIDS

**SUBJECT MATTER: NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH MONITORING SYSTEM 2019
GOAT STUDY – BIOLOGICAL TESTING**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States goat industries have been the subject of only one National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) goat study, in 2009. In that study, a lack of resources resulted in the inability to carry out the planned biological testing portions of the NAHMS 2009 goat study. No national studies, including biological testing, have been conducted to assess the prevalence of pathogens and diseases in United States goats.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to assure full completion of the biological testing components of the National Animal Health Monitoring System 2019 Goat Study by making necessary resources available.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 28 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON SHEEP, GOATS, AND CAMELIDS

SUBJECT MATTER: GENETIC SCRAPIE RESISTANCE - GOATS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Genotype selection for scrapie resistance in sheep has been proven to be a great asset to the eradication of scrapie in sheep. Genetic tools for goats should have similar benefits. Based on information presented by the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service researchers, sufficient data exists to support further efforts toward testing for goat scrapie genotype resistance and development of field applications in the National Scrapie Eradication Program. Additional studies are needed to assess the frequency of goat scrapie genotypes and assist producers in adopting these tools. It is important the upcoming National Animal Health Monitoring System 2019 Goat Study and other studies include scrapie genotyping components. Additionally, continuation of long-term follow up studies and other research relating to scrapie transmission and scrapie diagnostics are vital to successful scrapie eradication.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) to pursue efforts to develop pilot projects to explore the use of goat scrapie genotype testing in the National Scrapie Eradication Program. USAHA also requests that USDA, APHIS and USDA, Agricultural Research Service conduct surveys to assess the frequency of resistant genotypes in United States (US) goats, including National Animal Health Monitoring system 2019 Goat Study. We further urge the USDA to increase efforts to enhance the availability of resistant genotypic information to US goat producers and ongoing studies related to transmission and diagnostics related to scrapie.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 29 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON SHEEP, GOATS AND CAMELIDS

SUBJECT MATTER: SCRAPIE ERADICATION PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) relies greatly on owner compliance to identify their animals as they leave the farm for exhibition or sales. No-cost official ear tags have greatly encouraged identification (ID) and thus program compliance. There have been a multitude of problems noted with the use of official metal program tags such as infection, poor retention, difficulty in accurately recording the numbers, and safety hazards when shearing. With the expected publication of the interstate movement rule which will require the same ID requirements of goats as currently exist for sheep, the next few years are critical in encouraging goat and sheep producer compliance regarding ID and tagging. The industries feel strongly that, at a minimum, the provision of a limited number of no-cost official plastic tags will incentivize new goat and sheep producer compliance. In addition, the industries do not want to compromise the NSEP that has been built over the past 17 years at an expense of more than \$250 million.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to provide, at a minimum, a limited number of no-cost official plastic tags to producers enrolling in the National Scrapie Eradication Program for the first time. USDA, APHIS would provide the no-cost ear tags but producers would be responsible for acquiring an applicator. Further, the USAHA urges USDA, APHIS to continue to provide no-cost tags to markets and dealers.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 30 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON

**SUBJECT MATTER: REMOVAL OF SELECT AGENT STATUS FOR *BRUCELLA*
SPECIES**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In order to protect the Nation from terrorist attacks, Select Agent regulations restrict possession, transfer, and use of select agents and toxins. The restrictions have been highly effective in limiting access to dangerous agents and toxins by unauthorized individuals. Unfortunately, these same restrictions have limited opportunities for important research on *Brucella* spp., including *B. abortus*, *B. melitensis*, and *B. suis*. *B. abortus* is a disease endemic in Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) wildlife, while *B. suis* is endemic in feral swine populations throughout the United States, and *B. melitensis* is a foreign animal disease that has successfully been kept out of domestic livestock and wildlife populations in the United States.

A recent paper published by Olsen et. al documents that *Brucella* spp. can be removed from the biological select agent and toxins list based on clinical, biological, and epidemiological properties of the bacteria. In particular, the paper highlights that *Brucella* spp. are readily available in endemic areas, thus easily attained by individuals or groups with nefarious intentions. Previous reports estimating human morbidity and mortality in the event of a *Brucella* bioweapons attack did not adequately consider the fact that Brucellosis is the most common zoonotic infection reported in humans annually. Humans are considered dead end hosts for *Brucella* and are typically infected from exposure to animal reservoirs or animal products. Additionally, previous reports have listed the infectious dose for *Brucella* to be 10 to 100 bacteria, but research in closed environments indicate that aerosol exposure to a much higher concentration of bacteria is required to result in infection; thus, use of *Brucella* under natural conditions as a bioweapon would likely result in a limited to negligible rate of infection in humans or animals.

Costs associated with the effective eradication of swine and bovine brucellosis in the United States between 1934 and 1998 are conservatively estimated to be over \$3 billion dollars. The persistence of Brucellosis in wildlife reservoirs with an expanding terrain both within the GYA and the greater United States has resulted in potential incursions of the disease into the national domestic cattle and swine herds. A limitation on research due to the select agent status of *Brucella* spp. has reduced the capacity of research institutions to study *Brucella* under field conditions, a necessary step to develop effective vaccines and diagnostic tools. The continued expansion of wildlife reservoirs of *Brucella* spp.

without efficient vaccines and sensitive, specific diagnostic tools will result in additional costs to producers, and state and federal governments for disease control programs.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services and the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to remove *Brucella abortus*, *Brucella suis*, and *Brucella melitensis* from the biological select agent and toxins list, thereby enabling needed *Brucella* spp. research.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 31 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON

**SUBJECT MATTER: REQUEST FOR *BRUCELLA* SPECIES FUNDED
RESEARCH**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The national Brucellosis Eradication Program was established in 1934, and effectively eliminated *Brucella abortus* from cattle and domestic bison populations resulting in all 50 United States (US) states, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands being considered Brucellosis Class Free. *B. abortus* infected wild elk and wild bison in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) pose a continued threat to cattle and domestic bison in areas of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, while *B. suis*-infected feral swine found in most of the United States pose both a threat to animal and human health and a regulatory challenge for cattle and other species.

A key tool used to achieve brucellosis eradication was widespread administration of the RB51 vaccine in cattle and domestic bison populations, as well as serology and culture, to identify infected herds. A significant limitation of these tools is that serology, often used for initial screening, does not differentiate among the smooth *Brucella* spp. *B. abortus*, *B. suis*, and *B. melitensis*. Additionally, in the United States the only commercially available vaccine for *Brucella* is the RB51 vaccine for *B. abortus*, used in cattle and domestic bison. There is no vaccine available for *B. suis*.

As infected wildlife populations in the GYA and greater United States have flourished, eradication efforts have shifted to control strategies and costs associated with controlling brucellosis have increased. Presently, control programs are species-specific, with a *B. abortus* bovine program and a *B. suis* swine program in place that are administered through cooperation between state and federal animal health officials. These programs fail to consider the potential epidemiologic role and public health risk associated with detection of *Brucella* spp. in nontraditional species. Detection of *B. suis* in non-suidae species, such as cattle, has interrupted continuity of business and created a financial burden on producers as animal health officials take regulatory steps to investigate. Based on responses to a recent survey from the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO) and data from the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL), eight states have reported detection of *B. suis* in cattle since 2001. States, including those that reported detections of *B. suis* in cattle, indicated that they did or would take some form of regulatory action including investigation, quarantine, testing of herds, and culling of affected animals, at significant cost to state and federal resources, and the producer.

Despite the possibility for domestic livestock to interface with infected wildlife populations, slaughter surveillance for brucellosis is decreasing and most states have reduced or eliminated first-point testing at livestock markets. Therefore, while there is an increased opportunity for transmission of *Brucella* into program animals and spillover species, the number of samples available for speciation is decreasing, making existing gaps in knowledge of interspecies transfer, and vaccine development increasingly difficult to address. Additionally, the select agent status of *Brucella* spp. has limited the capacity of research institutions to study *Brucella* spp. under field and laboratory conditions, and it will need to be removed from the select agent list to facilitate necessary research.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests that the United States Department of Agriculture allocates additional resources to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, and Agricultural Research Service for *Brucella* species research, regardless of select agent status. Research projects should include, but not be limited to, enhancing understanding of the epidemiology of *B. abortus* and *B. suis* in spillover species, and the development of effective vaccines and more sensitive and specific diagnostic tests to differentiate *Brucella* species.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 32 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON

**SUBJECT MATTER: FIELD TRIAL NEEDED TO EVALUATE ULTRA HIGH
FREQUENCY RADIO-FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION
CATTLE BACK TAG FUNCTIONALITY WHEN COMBINED
WITH AND COMPARED TO OTHER CATTLE
IDENTIFICATION DEVICES**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Official Cattle Back Tag has been an essential tool for many decades in traceability efforts through the Market Cattle Identification (MCI) program which focused on the eradication of Brucellosis and Tuberculosis. It is still USDA approved identification (ID) for cattle moving direct to slaughter from livestock markets or farm of origin and for various types of disease affected cattle moving under permit to slaughter. During this long period of usage, the back tag has been thoroughly integrated into the business processes of the livestock markets by creating a link between the seller and buyer, an essential component of the Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) program. When backtags are correlated with permanent official ID, it completes the circuit allowing traceability of official ID from seller to buyer. This is essential to transitioning from traditional forms of permanent official ID to futuristic models where all program animals have permanent ID readable at the speed of commerce.

In recent years an electronic ultra high frequency (UHF) radio-frequency identification (RFID) version of the tag has been developed that retains the visual and physical attributes of the existing back tag but can also be read accurately at the speed of commerce in virtually all cattle venues including feedlots, load outs, sale barns, and slaughter facilities. By correlation, this provides the capacity for cattle with traditional official permanent ID that typically cannot be read without going through a chute or narrow alley (Ex. National Uniform Identification System (NUES) tags and low frequency RFID tags) to be read and recorded at the speed of commerce.

The field trials conducted thus far have been limited in duration (1-3 days) and have been mainly directed at testing tag readability at various distances and facility settings with different reading devices. These trials have shown that the UHF back tag can be read with very high accuracy at whatever movement speeds are typical for that facility.

To expand the cattle industry's understanding of the enhanced UHF backtags' capabilities and to evaluate their potential to improve ADT, more field trials are needed in which

animal ID's are read at the speed of commerce and captured in facility software and then used for animal management and traceability purposes in livestock markets, slaughter facilities, and other animal movement activities. To support such an extended field trial(s) funds were appropriated in the 2017 USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service budget to provide funding for the ADT program to develop cooperative agreements with the various State Animal Health Officials or grants to cattle industry related organizations or entities, if appropriate. These are "no-year" funds that are still available since these trials have not yet occurred.

The information such trials generate could be extremely helpful to the decisionmakers in the cattle industry to determine what ID tools would be most useful in attaining the ADT goals of the future and transitioning to such.

These studies would not only serve as a proving ground for UHF backtags to bridge the gap found with traditional permanent ID and the speed of commerce, in essence providing tomorrow's traceability today, but additionally they could pave the way for the potential use of UHF eartags as the next generation of permanent official ID through the installation of readers, creation of a working familiarity with the technology, and by integrating software systems with readers at key locations."

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services to prioritize the development of cooperative agreements or grants with States or appropriate cattle industry organizations utilizing the designated appropriated funds to conduct long term field trials using ultra high frequency (UHF) radio-frequency identification (RFID) cattle back tags in selected livestock markets and subsequent downstream slaughter facilities to evaluate the usefulness of these enhanced back tags as animal disease traceability tools.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 34 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON

**SUBJECT MATTER: TWO PRONGED APPROACH NEEDED FOR ADVANCING
CATTLE TRACEABILITY**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

From the traceability efforts of the Market Cattle Identification (MCI) program focused on the eradication of Brucellosis and Tuberculosis to the United States Animal Identification Plan (USAIP) initiated with the eradication of Brucellosis and phasing out of MCI, to the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) following the finding of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and to the current Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) program, traceability of the United States breeding cattle herd has been an ongoing effort framed by state and federal regulations outlining identification and movement documentation requirements. The specific purpose of this program is to allow rapid and accurate traceability of diseased cattle allowing identification, containment and removal of these animals for control purposes or to achieve or maintain disease eradication. A key component to the success of each of these programs is efficiency through full MANDATORY compliance for eligible animals thereby providing pinpoint traces and eliminating unnecessary quarantine testing or depopulation of herds implicated from a broad swath approach.

In parallel, the feeding sector of the United States beef industry has independently pursued VOLUNTARY traceability efforts through private alliances and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Process Verified Programs (PVP) and Quality System Assessment (QSA) value added programs allowing value added marketing to both local and international trade partners.

In 2017, the USDA formed a “State and Federal Working Group” with substantial experience and knowledge of animal disease traceability that “comprehensively reviewed stakeholder feedback and prepared the preliminary” fourteen recommendations for the advancement of animal disease traceability based on the feedback received from the public meetings held in April through July of 2017.

Feedback from stakeholders at these public meetings was very supportive of moving the current MANDATORY ADT program forward with enhancements to make it more efficient, yet it loudly and clearly stated that feeder cattle traceability should remain VOLUNTARY.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services to prioritize enhancing the existing mandatory Animal Disease Traceability program based upon the fourteen recommendations made by the State and Federal Working Group, which received feedback from the industry on those proposed directions. USDA should maintain continued support for the voluntary value-added programs and augment opportunities for the feeding sector to enhance trade and marketing.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 35 APPROVED AS AMENDED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON

SUBJECT MATTER: CONTINUED USE OF RB51 VACCINE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since the implementation of a national Brucellosis Eradication Program in 1934, *Brucella abortus* has been eliminated from cattle and domestic bison populations, resulting in all 50 United States (US) states, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands being considered Brucellosis Class Free. *B. abortus* infected wild elk and wild bison in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) pose a continued threat to cattle and domestic bison in areas of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, however, the surveillance programs in these states has been effective in preventing disease spread.

Widespread administration of brucellosis vaccine in cattle and domestic bison populations was a critical tool in the brucellosis eradication program. Cattle that are vaccinated with Strain RB51 are identified using an official identification ear tag and a vaccination tattoo. In many cases, the tattoo becomes illegible, either due to improper application or degradation over time. However, official identification correlated with vaccination certificates are sufficient to prove vaccination. If proof is not available, the animal can be vaccinated as an adult with RB51 without risking false positive test results.

The RB51 vaccine has been a highly successful aid in the completion of the national brucellosis eradication effort.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) strongly urges state animal health officials and cattle industry representatives to reconsider the need for mandated use of RB51 brucellosis vaccine except where *Brucella abortus* infected wildlife is a documented risk.

Further, the USAHA urges state animal health officials to consider rescinding interstate requirements that may be based on brucellosis vaccination status, or documentation of vaccination status, except as determined necessary by state animal health officials for animals moving into, within, or out of the Greater Yellowstone Area.

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 39 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON ONE HEALTH

**SUBJECT MATTER: INCREASED FISCAL YEAR 2020 FUNDING FOR THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE,
WILDLIFE SERVICES NATIONAL RABIES
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS), National Rabies Management Program (NRMP) has demonstrated that strategic implementation of cooperative oral rabies vaccination (ORV) programs targeting wildlife are cost-effective, while continuing to reduce rabies exposure and transmission among wildlife, livestock, pets and people. The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) determined that the most effective strategy to control terrestrial rabies targets the sources of infection (i.e., wildlife vector populations) with large-scale control efforts. ORV programs are designed to immunize target wildlife species by increasing the percentage of rabies-immune animals within vaccination zones, resulting in the reduction of rabies cases, prevention of viral spread (Phase 1 of the NRMP), and eventual rabies elimination (Phase 2 of the NRMP).

In early 2016, WS assembled federal, state, academic, and international experts to develop a comprehensive strategy to implement Phase 2 of the NRMP, elimination of the raccoon rabies variant in the Eastern United States. WS also developed and initiated an Enhanced Rabies Surveillance Program with state cooperators throughout the Northeast, Atlantic, and adjacent Mid-West and Southern States to improve early identification of rabies cases and recognition of translocated rabid animals. This resulted in detection of individual cases of raccoon rabies west of the Virginia and Ohio immune barrier during 2017-2018, and within an area of the Ohio ORV barrier in 2018. WS and the affected states immediately launched contingency vaccination strategies to halt continued rabies spread to new areas.

Successful ORV programs in Texas continue with rabies elimination in gray foxes and maintenance of an immune barrier along the Mexican border to keep the United States free of coyote (canine) and gray fox rabies. The requested funding will allow USDA to:

- Fully implement and continue the enhanced rabies surveillance program.
- Implement contingency actions in response to rabid animals in sensitive areas.
- Continue Phase 1 of the NRMP, to maintain existing ORV programs to control rabies and prevent spread in wildlife populations.

- Continue the evaluation of novel and US-licensed vaccines and baits.
- Continue studies related to rabies control in skunks.
- Initiate Phase 2 of the NRMP, to eliminate the raccoon rabies variant in the U.S.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests the 119th Congress to appropriate a minimum of \$33 million for program management and contingency actions at the state level in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget line item for the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services, National Rabies Management Program.