
RESOLUTION NUMBER: 37 APPROVED

SUBJECT MATTER: Increased Fiscal Year 2021 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 Organisation 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 raccoon rabies variant 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 (US). In 2019, the NRMP and cooperators distributed >9 million ORV baits, >8.2 million in the eastern US to combat raccoon rabies in 17 states and >1 million in Texas to prevent the reemergence of rabies in coyotes and grey foxes along the border with Mexico. The total area baited in 2019 was >63,740 square miles, an area slightly smaller than Wisconsin. In 2019, 20 miles of the ORV zone, equating to 2,324 square miles, was removed along the border with Canada in northern New York, Vermont and New Hampshire, and 2,541 square miles of ORV zone was created eastward from the ORV zones in Pennsylvania and West Virginia into the raccoon rabies enzootic area and classified as "new area under management". To date, there was no new NRMP initiated contingency actions reported.

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 US free of coyote (canine) and gray fox rabies. The requested funding will allow USDA to:

- 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, mongoose, and vampire bats.
- Initiate and enhance the operations of Phase 2 of the NRMP, to eliminate the raccoon rabies variant in the U.S.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests the 116th Congress to appropriate a minimum of \$33 million for the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal Plant Inspection Service, Wildlife Services, National Rabies Management Program.