



# Homeland Security

Marty Zaluski, DVM  
President  
United States Animal Health Association  
4221 Mitchell Ave.  
St. Joseph, MO 64507

Dear Dr. Zaluski:

Thank you for your December 9, 2019 letter to Acting Secretary Wolf supporting the removal of *Brucella* species from the biological select agent and toxins list. Your letter has been assigned to me as the Acting Assistant Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office (CWMD) for reply. CWMD leads DHS coordination with interagency partners on biodefense matters such as the listing or delisting of select agents.

Your letter referenced USAHA Resolution 32: *Removal of Select Agent Status for Brucella species* (“Resolution”). The Resolution urges DHS “to support the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the removal of *Brucella abortus*, *Brucella suis* and *Brucella melitensis* from the biological select agent and toxins list, thereby enabling needed *Brucella* spp. research and diagnostics.”

USDA and HHS are the Federal Government leads for the biennial process that reviews the agents on the biological select agent and toxins list. DHS is working closely with our interagency counterparts to review this request. The review includes consideration of a range of concerns, including current outbreaks, impacts to national security, and protecting the Nation while continuing to aggressively promote science and research.

On March 17, 2020, USDA and HHS released advanced notices of proposed rulemaking to receive public comments on the proposed removal of several agents from the list including the strains of *Brucella* listed above. The public has until May 18, 2020, to respond to the proposed rule.

I can assure you that the Department takes the issue of listing or delisting select agents seriously. The Food, Agriculture, and Veterinary Defense team within CWMD will continue to actively engage with our interagency partners in the select agent review process.

Thank you again for your letter.

Sincerely,

Gary C. Rasicot  
Assistant Secretary (Acting)