RESOLUTION NUMBER: 5  APPROVED

SOURCE:  COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT MATTER:  ROUTINE AND EMERGENCY DISPOSAL OF ANIMAL CARCASSES AND ANIMAL PARTS TO PREVENT ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION FROM SPECIFIED RISK MATERIALS

DATE:  MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, OCTOBER 12-18, 2006

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Animal agriculture is facing a crisis regarding the disposal of animal parts and carcasses. Two issues have exacerbated this problem. Governmental actions to help prevent transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) diseases now require the removal of certain “specified risk materials” (SRM) from animal feeds. Acceptable alternative uses for SRM’s have not yet been identified. Proper disposal is, at a minimum, a short-term responsibility and likely is an ongoing need. In addition, proper disposal of carcasses is a priority when losses occur during emergencies, e.g., including, but not limited to, hurricanes, floods, droughts, other disasters and sacrifices made as a part of dealing with a foreign animal disease incident. Lacking a plan to properly deal with disposal issues poses potential public and animal health, and environmental risks unless a national animal disposal strategy is developed and implemented.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) supports the development of a national coordinated carcass and specified risk materials disposal / utilization plan and guidance that will enable states to better prepare to address routine and emergency livestock disposal needs while protecting both public health and the environment.

USAHA and AAVLD urges the United States Secretary of Agriculture to take a leadership role in this plan development. The Secretary’s role should include bringing together federal agencies who have jurisdiction over animal feed, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM), disposal of solid wastes, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), animal health, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), meat food safety, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), transportation, Department of Transportation (DOT) and conservation programs, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) with State Departments of Agriculture, State Veterinarians, the livestock industry, the rendering industry and other appropriate stakeholders.

RESPONSE:
Thank you for your letter of November 15, 2006, to Secretary Johanns concerning resolutions passed by the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) at its October 2006 annual meeting.

We welcome USAHA’s input, and will take the organization’s views under consideration as we address the issues in question. We look forward to further dialogue with USAHA on these and other matters as we move forward with important animal health initiatives.

We value your organization’s longstanding collaborative relationship with USDA, and I know that we will continue to work together to advance U.S. animal health.