

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2007

RESOLUTION: 30 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND
VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL ANIMAL
HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK

DATES: RENO, NEVADA, OCTOBER 18 – 24, 2007

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) is part of a national strategy to coordinate the nation's federal, state and university laboratory resources to allow authorities to better respond to any type of animal health emergency, including bioterrorist events, newly emerging diseases, and foreign animal disease (FAD) agents that threaten the nation's food supply and public health.

In fiscal year 2002, 12 state and university diagnostic laboratories were selected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to receive United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grants to initiate the network. In order to ensure that the NAHLN is fully capable of responding to any animal health emergency, funding will be required for appropriate facilities, training and equipment.

USDA-APHIS-VS and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) have established a collaborative relationship to produce, distribute and use proficiency panels and reference materials in order to harmonize the diagnosis of major animal diseases between the United States and Canada.

This initiative is separate from, but integrates with and supports, the Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act (VWEA, S. 914, H.R. 2206) by providing training opportunities for veterinarians in public health practice.

It is essential that annual appropriations be provided for the full implementation, maintenance and long-term support of the NAHLN.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) reiterates the need for the Secretary of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA),

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to request line-item funding in the USDA budget in the amount of \$35 million per year for ongoing support of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) and to ensure that adequate funding is available for transfer and full implementation of newly developed and validated assays from federal and other laboratories to the NAHLN laboratories.

USAHA requests the House Agriculture and the Senate Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies' Subcommittees on Appropriations provide \$35 million annually for the infrastructure support needed to fully implement the NAHLN.

RESPONSE:

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services recognizes the United States Animal Health Association's concerns and appreciates the opportunity to respond. In 2007, the Steering Committee of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) requested a review of the NAHLN be conducted with three goals: 1) Evaluate how well the original objectives of the NAHLN have been accomplished, 2) suggest new or modified objectives for the future NAHLN, and 3) identify key issues that would be the focus of subsequent phases of the review. The summary report and recommendations have been finalized and provided to the NAHLN Steering Committee and stakeholders. The NAHLN Review report affirmed the original NAHLN objectives, recognized strengths and accomplishments, and identified recommendations and concerns that need to be addressed. Addressing the concerns and needs will assist in determining the funding necessary to fully implement the NAHLN. The NAHLN Steering Committee met on January 10, 2008, to discuss how to address the findings in the review.

The APHIS Administrator at the January 2008 NAHLN Steering Committee meeting offered to facilitate discussions on NAHLN funding and approaches with the budget office.