UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION – 2007

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 34  APPROVED AS AMENDED

SOURCE:  COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT MATTER:  VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE EXPANSION ACT (HR 1232, S. 746)

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Veterinary medicine is essential to public health and national security. There is a critical shortage of veterinarians in certain key public practice areas. The nation’s veterinary medical colleges are at capacity and can enroll only 2,500 students per year. Although these colleges provide a national resource by training veterinarians, only 26 States provide direct support to the 28 colleges. Federal support is needed to increase capacity in veterinary medical education.

The United States Congress has not directly supported veterinary medical education in over 30 years. According to animal health officials, nearly 6,000 veterinarians would be needed to respond to a major animal health catastrophe. Without a sufficient supply of veterinarians with the unique training needed to respond to an emergency, the nation’s public health infrastructure is at risk.

The Veterinary Public Health Workforce Expansion Act (VPHWEA) was introduced in the 110th Congress by Senator Wayne Allard (CO) and Representative Tammy Baldwin (WI-2) in early 2007. The VPHWEA would authorize a competitive grants program for veterinary medical colleges and other eligible entities to increase capacity in veterinary medical education. At least an additional 400 students enrolled in a veterinary medical professional program are needed per year to meet the current United States population societal needs.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate enact the Veterinary Public Health Workforce Expansion Act (VPHWEA) and appropriate the full amount of authorized funds to build capacity in veterinary medical education.
USAHA Executive Committee and Committee on Government Relations members are requested to provide relevant information to Members of Congress regarding the lack of capacity in the nation’s veterinary medical colleges and the need to pass the VPHWEA, as introduced, during regular visits to Washington.

USAHA members are requested to formally support the VPHWEA and actively advocate its passage with their individual Members of Congress.