RESOLUTION NUMBER: 11   Combined with 33   APPROVED

SOURCE: USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL HEALTH SUVEILLANCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON

SUBJECT MATTER: IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S VETERINARY SERVICES PROCESS STREAMLINING DATABASE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Veterinary Services Process Streamlining (VSPS) database is one option accredited veterinarians may use to issue electronic Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (eCVIs). VSPS allows State Animal Health Official (SAHO) staff to log into the system to retrieve issued eCVIs. Additionally, VSPS allows for the retrospective entry of information from paper CVIs or other sources into the searchable database module (RetroCVI). Once logged in, SAHO staff must download one eCVI at a time. A request was made to VSPS staff to allow for bulk download of issued eCVIs and this request was confirmed by VSPS staff as submitted for review in September 2016. As of September 2018, no bulk download abilities for eCVIs have been integrated into VSPS.

VSPS has not been upgraded to allow either an XML eCVI output that meets the draft data standards developed by the Animal Health Surveillance and Information Systems' subcommittee on eCVI Data Standards, or the ability to upload XML data into the RetroCVI module used by some States. Consequently, VSPS currently does not have the ability to send data electronically to any SAHO-desired destination (e.g. CVI Central, SCS, StateVet.com, USAHerds, other State database, or designated email address).

Many States elect to have all traceability data, including all CVIs, accessible within their own offices and/or captured in their own databases. The current process for SAHO staff accessing VSPS issued eCVIs is extremely inefficient, creating a barrier to animal disease traceability and prohibiting advancements towards SAHOs data sharing goals. SAHOs are expected to provide summary information to USDA as part of accomplishment reports for Cooperative Agreements and for other specific queries, yet gathering the required information out of VSPS is often very inefficient and cumbersome. Separately, several SAHOs have suggested additional VSPS upgrades to USDA information technology helpdesk personnel. The upgrades are necessary to perform work more efficiently, but the suggestions have gone mostly unimplemented. The USDA Secretary of Agriculture Dr. Sonny Perdue has remarked that one of his

highest priorities is running an efficient agency that prioritizes customer service. It is past time that these concerns with VSPS are addressed in line with this priority.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Diagnosticians (AAVLD) urge the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to immediately prioritize upgrading VS Process Streamlining (VSPS) to better address the needs of State and federal animal health officials as well as accredited veterinarians utilizing the system. Upgrades should at minimum include 1) ability to download all issued electronic Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (eCVIs) for user specified issue dates in bulk, with each eCVI document as an individual PDF file; 2) upgrade VSPS to allow an eCVI XML output that meets, and continues to meet, the current eCVI standard developed by the Animal Health Surveillance and Information Systems' eCVI Data Standards Subcommittee; 3) expand the species list within VSPS to include all species included in the eCVI schema from the Animal Health Surveillance and Information Systems' eCVI Data Standards Subcommittee; 4) upgrade VSPS to allow acceptance of XML input, compatible with the previously referenced standard, from non-VSPS issued eCVIs into the VSPS RetroCVI module; 5) develop a mechanism for issued eCVIs, in PDF form and accompanying XML data, to be sent electronically to a designated email address or a State database (e.g. CVI Central, SCS, StateVet.com, USAHerds, or other State database); 6) allow export of RetroCVI data in bulk; and 7) allow searchability of data across both the eCVI and RetroCVI modules. All upgrades should be implemented in VSPS prior to the 2019 USAHA and AAVLD annual meetings. Additionally, resources should be budgeted both short term and long term to allow for necessary improvement, updates, and modifications to the system as is needed and requested by the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials and other traceability partners.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

USDA, APHIS, VS recognizes the concerns of USAHA and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians and appreciates the opportunity to respond. As addressed in USAHA's 2019 Resolution 7, VS applauds the work of the Data Standards subcommittee on collaboratively developing standards for the exchange of eCVI. VS intends to endorse Version 2 standards and, using our standard information technology governance process, prioritize activities to implement the new standards.

The standard governance process allows VS to evaluate the feasibility of the enhancements requested in this resolution. Our preliminary review of the multiple systems involved in the requests indicate that we already have contracts in place that could be leveraged to address many of the enhancements. Development timelines and security assessment requirements will impact the timeline for implementing such enhancements; we anticipate many of the enhancements within VS-scope will be completed by fiscal year 2020.