

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 11 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON POULTRY AND OTHER AVIAN SPECIES

SUBJECT MATTER: Avian Metapneumovirus Live Vaccine for Poultry

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Avian metapneumovirus (aMPV) – also known as turkey rhinotracheitis, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis, or swollen head syndrome – is an acute respiratory virus of turkeys, meat chickens, egg-laying chickens, and poultry breeding stock. It causes a respiratory infection which may result in high mortality, as well as reproductive disorders potentially causing a permanent flock reduction in egg production. Since its identification in Fall 2023, the disease has spread to 29 states, having a major impact on poultry production in the United States (US).

The US poultry industry has an urgent need for modified-live aMPV subtype A and B vaccines for turkeys and chickens. Published peer-reviewed scientific studies demonstrate the cross-protection between serotypes. Importation of internationally approved commercial modified-live vaccines would help fill this urgent need of the poultry industry. Inactivated vaccines alone are impractical, less effective, and not suitable for all types of poultry production. The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services, Veterinary Services, Center for Veterinary Biologics is allowing importation of Master Seed and Master Cell Stock for domestic production of live products, but the necessary regulatory pathway to domestically produce a modified-live vaccine will still require 4 to 6 years. Due to the impact of this disease on the poultry industry, a quicker interim resolution is needed to ensure the sustainability of turkey and chicken production in the US.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association strongly urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB) to expedite the approval of the importation of modified-live, commercially available vaccines for avian metapneumovirus subtypes A and B for chickens and turkeys which meet USDA-APHIS- VS-CVB's requirements for purity.

FINAL RESPONSE:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

Due to the impacts of this outbreak, APHIS' Center for Veterinary Biologics has conducted risk assessments of foreign-manufactured avian metapneumovirus modified live virus (MLV) and inactivated products for importation. In general, the importation of live products carries a greater risk of introducing contaminants or poultry diseases not in the United States. APHIS has conducted limited purity and safety testing for these foreign-manufactured aMPV MLV vaccine candidates for use in U.S. poultry as part of the risk assessment. APHIS has issued import permits for five internationally registered aMPV MLV products since December 2024 and all five are being shipped to the field as of July 2025. As of July 2025, APHIS is working with a manufacturer to have samples submitted to test a sixth aMPV MLV product.

In July 2025, following consultation with industry groups and the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials, CVB provided guidance to manufacturers to decrease the regulatory burden of shipping product to the field. Manufacturers and producers are still required to collect and maintain the same information in case of an incident but will no longer have to provide information to the CVB proactively except for test reports of MLV products. This should streamline product availability for outbreak response efforts.