

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 12 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON POULTRY AND OTHER AVIAN SPECIES

SUBJECT MATTER: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Vaccination Update

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) is thankful the United States Department of Agriculture involved stakeholders in discussions around highly pathogenic avian influenza vaccination strategy in commercial poultry. USAHA encourages the Secretary of Agriculture to release to the United States poultry industry any available next steps toward an H5 influenza vaccination strategy (e.g., surveillance plans) in poultry.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Following the United States Secretary of Agriculture’s announcement of a five-pronged plan to combat highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) convened a series of working groups to discuss vaccination, surveillance, and other critical components of H5 HPAI control. The industry is grateful for the collaborative spirit and forward momentum the USDA has demonstrated over the past several months in evaluating vaccination as a tool for preventing HPAI infections in commercial poultry.

The continued threat of HPAI presents significant concerns for animal welfare, human health, and mental well-being, especially as wild bird migration is underway, dairy cattle continue to test positive, and commercial poultry flocks face ongoing depopulation due to virus detection. Therefore, the release of a national vaccination strategy—one that fully considers trade implications—is urgently needed.

INTERIM 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.

The United States does not currently authorize the use of HPAI vaccine, except on a case-by-case basis for endangered or zoo species. However, APHIS is exploring alternative strategies to address HPAI, including possible vaccination and other emerging approaches. As part of this work, APHIS has gathered input from domestic stakeholders on the feasibility, costs, and other considerations associated with potential strategies under development. APHIS has not yet engaged international partners, because these strategies are still being refined.

APHIS remains committed to developing formal standards, guidance, monitoring, and surveillance plans that align with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) requirements to ensure that any future strategy is implemented properly and does not create

unnecessary trade barriers. As strategies progress, APHIS will publicly share information for all stakeholders—including trading partners—before implementation.

APHIS shared a first draft of the HPAI emergency vaccination strategy with state animal health officials and a limited number of industry partners for comment. Their feedback is now incorporated into a second draft, which APHIS will share more broadly once the Secretary of Agriculture authorizes wider distribution.