
RESOLUTION NUMBER: 17 APPROVED AS AMENDED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON SHEEP, GOATS, AND CAMELIDS

SUBJECT MATTER: Request for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to Define when Authorization of Response Activities for Depopulation will be Approved by USDA-APHIS-VS During a Foreign Animal Disease Outbreak that Involves Foot and Mouth Disease

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) adopt the following policy regarding response activities prior to an outbreak:

During a foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak, the USDA-APHIS-VS authorization for response to depopulate the first detected case within a state or territory will require confirmation by the USDA-APHIS-VS National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL). The USDA-APHIS-VS authorization for response to depopulate subsequent cases in a state or territory will not need to be confirmed by USDA-APHIS-VS-NVSL but will require:

- 1) An FMD non-negative or presumptive positive result at an approved National Animal Health Laboratory Network laboratory, and
- 2) Confirmation of clinical signs compatible with FMD on the affected premises in wildlife or domestic livestock.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Policy development during a foreign animal disease outbreak is challenging. It requires time and input from numerous stakeholders. During a foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak, rapid detection and response to FMD cases are critical.

Confirmation of cases by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) is essential to prevent false positives and inappropriate responses. It is important for USDA-APHIS-VS to confirm the presence of FMD in each affected state or territory.

However, confirmation by USDA-APHIS-VS-NVSL can delay the authorization of indemnity payments for depopulation.

Diagnostic testing is conducted at one of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratories approved for FMD testing and is confirmed at the USDA-APHIS-VS-NVSL Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory. Confidence in NAHLN stems from the oversight and testing proficiencies mandated by USDA-APHIS-VS. In addition to laboratory diagnostics, field responders will provide objective assessments of FMD clinical signs observed during investigations at each affected premises during an outbreak.

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.

APHIS understands that indemnity policies during an FMD outbreak are a major concern to USAHA and stakeholders. The FMD virus is not zoonotic; therefore, APHIS and state animal health officials will first focus on quarantine, site biosecurity, and contact tracing to contain the outbreak. Indemnity decisions and any livestock depopulation will occur after those initial steps.

Funding availability will be the main factor driving indemnity policies during an outbreak. Other considerations include the regulatory confirmation requirements, degree of confidence in any National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) non-negative FMD diagnostic test result, and application of the APHIS Case Definition for FMD. The case definition provides guidance for evaluating diagnostic test results and livestock clinical signs to assign a regulatory status of suspect case, presumptive positive case, or confirmed positive case. Finally, indemnity authorization depends on the submission of an indemnity request, including all required recordkeeping documents (e.g., mortality sheets, herd inventory logs, etc.) for appraisal.

APHIS recognizes that depopulation and disposal of livestock on any farm will be difficult to accomplish, and that proper planning and resources will be needed to ensure the health and safety of the owner, grower, and responders, and animal welfare. APHIS supports additional scenario discussions and preparedness guidance development to better prepare stakeholders in the event of an incursion.

APHIS agrees to develop guidance on USDA authorization of FMD response activities in a state with input from USAHA and stakeholders.