UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

130th Annual Meeting
October 15-21, 2026
Madison, WI

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 17 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: Accessing Cow's Milk Samples for Foot and Mouth Disease Testing as an Outbreak Response Tool

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), in coordination with state animal health officials, state dairy regulatory agencies, the USDA-APHIS-VS National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), the Food and Drug Administration, the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments, and affected livestock and dairy industry organizations, to take the following actions in advance of a foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak:

1. Develop and maintain coordinated operational protocols for bulk milk sample collection, labeling, including minimum data elements and the use of premises identification numbers, chain of custody, packaging, and transportation; and

2. Establish memoranda of agreement, or equivalent arrangements, between state animal health and state dairy regulatory agencies, in consultation with industry, so that, if FMD is detected in the United States, representative farm-level milk samples, such as "Universal" or Appendix N samples, can be obtained from milk quality laboratories and submitted immediately to the USDA-APHIS-VS-NAHLN or USDA-APHIS-VS, National Veterinary Services Laboratories for FMD testing without jurisdictional delay.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious disease of cloven-hoofed livestock. Although it is not a food safety or public health risk, an outbreak would have severe animal health, economic, movement, and trade consequences for United States livestock industries.

FMD virus can be present in milk before clinical signs are observed. Real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) testing of bulk milk can provide a practical, noninvasive, herd-level surveillance tool for early detection and outbreak management in dairy cattle. Bulk milk testing is intended to complement, not replace, clinical surveillance and other diagnostic testing.

The National Milk Producers Federation white paper, *Using Bulk Milk Testing as a Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak Response Tool*, funded through a cooperative agreement (AP24VSSP0000C119) with the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, proposes an Animal Health Surveillance Milk (AHSM) sample to represent saleable milk from lactating cows on a dairy premises and recommends advance planning for surveillance in FMD Control Areas and Surveillance Zones. The white paper also identifies operational needs for using milk surveillance during an FMD response. These include standardized protocols for milk sample labeling, submission, transport, chain of custody, testing, confirmation, and reporting; memoranda of agreement or equivalent arrangements between state animal health and dairy regulatory agencies to allow existing milk samples to be accessed rapidly for official testing without jurisdictional delays; and coordination among animal health officials, laboratories, industry partners, and dairy regulatory agencies, including the Food and Drug Administration and the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments, regarding oversight and implementation of the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance.

Experience with highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 milk testing demonstrated opportunities to improve sample access, identification, transport, data management, laboratory accessioning, surge capacity, and communication of test results to facilitate a rapid and efficient response and limit disease spread. These systems should be developed, funded, and exercised before an FMD outbreak occurs.

REFERENCE: National Milk Producers Federation. *Using Bulk Milk Testing as a Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak Response Tool*. 2026. Created, in part, through cooperative agreement AP24VSSP0000C119 with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program. The contents may not necessarily represent the views of APHIS.