UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 1 APPROVED

SOURCE: JOINT COMMITTEE ON NAHLN

SUBJECT MATTER: Enhanced National Animal Health Laboratory Network Preparedness for Foot and Mouth Disease Testing of Cow's Bulk Milk as an Outbreak Response Tool

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, in coordination with the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), to:

1. Conduct a pre-outbreak assessment of the resources and training necessary to ensure NAHLN readiness and surge capacity for foot and mouth disease, a multispecies disease involving multiple sample types, including milk, which may require a just-in-time Emergency Use Authorization. The assessment should address milk sample proficiency testing; reagent availability; laboratory staffing and capacity for milk sample handling and accessioning; acquisition and distribution of laboratory-compatible sample containers to the dairy industry; electronic sample submission and reporting systems; and interlaboratory transfer of samples and data.

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, livestock movement, and trade consequences for United States (US) livestock industries.

FMD virus can be present in milk before clinical signs are observed. Real-time reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction 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 (NMPF) white paper, *Using Bulk Milk Testing as a Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak Response Tool*, funded through Cooperative Agreement AP24VSSP0000C119 from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, identifies several National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) readiness and surge-capacity needs for implementing milk-based surveillance during an FMD outbreak. These include validation and regulatory approval of milk as a diagnostic sample type;

development and maintenance of milk-specific proficiency testing programs; sufficient inventories of reagents, consumables, and laboratory-compatible sample containers; modifications to laboratory information management systems to accommodate high-volume milk sample accessioning and reporting; standardized electronic submission and chain-of-custody procedures; and staffing, training, and exercise programs to ensure that laboratories can rapidly scale milk sample handling and testing during an emergency.

The white paper also identifies the need for coordinated protocols for sample routing, interlaboratory transfer, confirmatory testing at the USDA-APHIS, National Veterinary Services Laboratory, and timely communication of test results among animal health officials, dairy regulators, laboratories, veterinarians, and industry partners.

Experience from highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 milk testing demonstrated that large-scale milk surveillance creates unique logistical and laboratory challenges beyond those associated with traditional animal diagnostic samples. Challenges included obtaining access to milk samples collected through regulatory programs; maintaining accurate premises identification and sample attribution; transporting large volumes of samples to laboratories; accessioning and tracking samples within laboratory information systems; managing laboratory staffing and throughput during periods of surge demand; and efficiently reporting results to decision-makers. These experiences highlighted the need for advanced investment in NAHLN infrastructure, personnel, training, data systems, and exercise-based preparedness so that milk surveillance can be rapidly and effectively deployed as an FMD outbreak response tool.

The NMPF white paper proposes an Animal Health Surveillance Milk 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. It also recommends memoranda of understanding or equivalent agreements between state animal health and dairy regulatory agencies so that existing milk samples can be accessed rapidly for official testing without jurisdictional delays.

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 from the USDA-APHIS National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program. The contents may not necessarily represent the views of USDA-APHIS.

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 2 APPROVED

SOURCE: JOINT COMMITTEE ON NAHLN

SUBJECT MATTER: Establishing a Predictable Annual Award Timeline for National Animal Health Laboratory Network Infrastructure Cooperative Agreements to Ensure Operational Continuity

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RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians urge the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services, to:

1. Establish and adhere to a standardized, predictable annual timeline for the review, processing, and execution of National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) infrastructure cooperative agreements;
2. Ensure that cooperative agreement awards are fully executed and issued no later than June 1 of each year, providing state and university laboratories with sufficient lead time before the July 1 start of the state fiscal year;
3. Streamline administrative processes within the USDA-APHIS to eliminate late-cycle processing delays and reduce the need for emergency pre-award spending authorizations by recipient institutions; and
4. Prioritize consistent and timely funding transfers to sustain core laboratory infrastructure, retain specialized diagnostic personnel, and ensure network-wide readiness for foreign animal disease surveillance and emergency response.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) relies on federal cooperative agreements to fund core laboratory infrastructure. These agreements represent a vital federal-state-private partnership, providing the foundational capacity, diagnostic capabilities, equipment, and trained personnel required for business continuity, ongoing surveillance, and rapid emergency response to animal health outbreaks involving NAHLN-scoped diseases.

In recent years, sporadic changes in funding availability, shifts in administrative policies, and delays in federal award processing have introduced significant uncertainty into network operations. Unpredictable award cycles force state and university diagnostic

laboratories to navigate substantial administrative challenges, threatening their ability to maintain uninterrupted staffing and operational readiness.

A primary operational challenge stems from the misalignment between federal award execution timelines and state institutional fiscal calendars. The fiscal year for the vast majority of NAHLN member laboratories begins on July 1. When federal cooperative agreements are delayed beyond this date, as occurred in 2026, when award notices were delayed by 14 weeks, laboratories are forced to establish complex pre-award spending authorizations and assume financial risk simply to maintain ongoing operations and retain specialized diagnostic staff. The 2026 delays extended nearly to the end of the federal fiscal year on September 30, creating additional risk because these funds are not "no-year" funds and, therefore, could have been lost if the awards had not been executed before the end of the federal fiscal year.

To ensure business continuity, safeguard diagnostic capabilities, and eliminate reliance on emergency pre-award spending workarounds, the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service should establish a standardized, predictable annual funding calendar. Ensuring that cooperative agreement awards are finalized and issued by June 1 each year would better align federal award execution with state laboratory fiscal cycles and enable laboratories to execute their agreed-upon scopes of work without disruption, thereby supporting national diagnostic preparedness.

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 3 APPROVED

SOURCE: JOINT COMMITTEE ON NAHLN

SUBJECT MATTER: Adoption of Standardized Fixed-Unit Pricing and Utilization of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network Coordinating Council for Indefinite-Delivery/ Indefinite-Quantity (IDIQ) Diagnostic Testing Contracts

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RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians urge the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, in coordination with the Office of Contracting and Procurement, to:

1. Transition National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) Indefinite-Delivery/Indefinite-Quantity (IDIQ) diagnostic testing procurement from individual laboratory cost-based bidding to a standardized fixed-unit-rate schedule;

2. Authorize and engage the NAHLN Coordinating Council, comprising state animal health officials, laboratory officials, and industry representatives, to evaluate operational costs and propose a standardized fixed-price fee schedule for contracted IDIQ testing, based on input from the Joint Committee on the NAHLN and other relevant stakeholders;

3. Incorporate mechanisms into fixed-rate IDIQ schedules to account for inflation and regional differences in labor costs; and

4. Streamline contracting procedures to eliminate administrative backlogs, ensure timely contract execution, and maintain uninterrupted diagnostic readiness across the network.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) plays a vital role in protecting United States livestock, wildlife, and public health through rapid diagnostic testing, early disease detection, and surge capacity during foreign animal disease (FAD) outbreaks and national surveillance efforts. To support these critical activities, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

utilizes Indefinite-Delivery/Indefinite-Quantity (IDIQ) procurement contracts under the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) to reimburse state and university diagnostic laboratories.

Under current practice, requiring individual NAHLN laboratories to submit unique, competitive price proposals for each test creates substantial administrative delays and burdens for both state laboratories and USDA contracting officers. The review and negotiation of individual laboratory pricing proposals create significant administrative bottlenecks, delay contract execution, and introduce operational uncertainty ahead of peak surveillance periods and disease incursions.

Under existing federal procurement regulations, specifically FAR Part 12 (Acquisition of Commercial Products and Commercial Services) and FAR Part 16 (Types of Contracts), USDA-APHIS has the legal authority to establish a standardized, fixed-price fee schedule. Rather than requiring individual bid evaluations, USDA-APHIS could issue solicitations with pre-established unit rates derived from baseline USDA-APHIS, National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) operational costs, allowing accredited laboratories to opt in to the predetermined fee schedule.

The NAHLN Coordinating Council, comprising state animal health officials, laboratory directors, and industry representatives, possesses the necessary subject matter expertise, operational knowledge, and stakeholder perspective to evaluate diagnostic requirements and baseline operational costs. Allowing the NAHLN Coordinating Council to propose standardized fixed prices and a recommended reimbursement schedule would help ensure that testing rates are fair, fiscally responsible, transparent, and reflective of actual diagnostic costs. The reimbursement structure could also incorporate mechanisms such as economic price adjustments and premium fees, as appropriate, to support laboratory readiness for low-volume FAD investigations.

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 4 **APPROVED AS AMENDED**

SOURCE: **JOINT COMMITTEE ON NAHLN**

SUBJECT MATTER: **Enhancing National Animal Health Laboratory Network Preparedness and Diagnostic Capacity for New World Screwworm Response**

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) urge the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to develop and support a national preparedness and response program for New World screwworm (NWS) within the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), including:

- Development and deployment of standardized training, continuing education, and competency-based workforce development programs in NWS diagnostics, entomology, and parasitology for NAHLN laboratories;
- Establishment of a formal process to certify and authorize qualified NAHLN laboratories with existing trained expertise to conduct official NWS diagnostic testing;
- Development of standardized diagnostic protocols, reference materials, and laboratory guidance documents to support consistent identification, testing, reporting, and response activities;
- Establishment and maintenance of an NWS proficiency testing program for NAHLN laboratories to ensure ongoing readiness and competency;
- Support for tabletop exercises, preparedness activities, and laboratory response drills that incorporate NWS detection, reporting, and response scenarios;
- Expansion of partnerships among NAHLN laboratories, state and federal animal health officials, entomologists, universities, and other subject-matter experts to strengthen national diagnostic capacity; and
- Identification and prioritization of resources necessary to develop, certify, and sustain NWS testing capabilities throughout the NAHLN.

Further, USAHA and AAVLD urge the Secretary of Agriculture to re-allocate the funds necessary to support laboratory authorization and certification, training, proficiency testing, workforce development, preparedness exercises, and capability enhancement for NWS within the NAHLN.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

New World screwworm (NWS; *Cochliomyia hominivorax*) is a parasitic fly whose larvae infest living, warm-blooded animals causing severe tissue damage, animal suffering, economic losses, and significant animal health response challenges. The successful eradication of NWS from the United States (US) represented a major achievement in animal health; however, NWS is no longer merely a potential threat. Recent incursions into Texas and New Mexico have made NWS an active threat, posing immediate risks to US livestock, wildlife, companion animals, and other susceptible hosts. [aphis.usda.gov], [aphis.usda.gov]

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) plays a critical role in national preparedness and response for foreign animal diseases and emerging animal health threats. NAHLN laboratories provide surge testing capacity, standardized diagnostic methods, trained personnel, and coordinated reporting systems that support rapid detection and response efforts throughout the US.

At present, participation in NWS preparedness activities remains limited primarily to border-state laboratories and selected affiliate laboratories. California and Texas laboratories have successfully completed proficiency testing and are activated for surveillance activities, while New Mexico has developed an innovative pilot program through collaboration between a state entomologist and a NAHLN laboratory. Although the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, National Veterinary Services Laboratories currently maintain diagnostic capacity, ongoing NWS incursions underscore the need for broader network authorization and testing readiness.

To respond effectively to this active threat, national diagnostic capacity must expand. The United States Animal Health Association recognizes that NWS detection requires specialized expertise in entomology, parasitology, specimen identification, and associated laboratory procedures. Although network-wide workforce development is necessary, certain NAHLN laboratories already possess relevant expertise that could be leveraged immediately if those laboratories were formally certified and authorized by USDA to conduct official testing.

Now is the critical time to expand entomology and parasitology expertise within NAHLN; establish pathways to certify qualified laboratories; support workforce development; provide continuing education; conduct tabletop exercises; and establish proficiency testing programs. Such investments will strengthen immediate response capabilities, maximize surge testing capacity, and support state and federal animal health officials during ongoing and future NWS incursions in North America.

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 5 **APPROVED**

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON SWINE**

SUBJECT MATTER: **Evaluation of the *Pseudorabies Eradication State-Federal-Industry Program Standards***

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) supports and requests that the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services work with the USAHA Committee on Swine to review the *Pseudorabies Eradication State-Federal-Industry Program Standards* and provide feedback, with the results presented at the 2027 USAHA Annual Meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The *Pseudorabies Eradication State-Federal-Industry Program Standards* have served as the foundational framework for the United States pseudorabies eradication program and continue to provide guidance for surveillance and response, as evidenced by the 2026 pseudorabies detection in commercial swine in Iowa.

The domestic swine industry, animal disease surveillance systems, disease control programs, and regulatory frameworks have evolved substantially since the development of the current standards, which have an effective date of November 1, 2003.

A periodic review of animal disease response strategies helps ensure that disease control programs remain scientifically sound, practical, risk-based, and reflective of current industry, trade, and regulatory needs. Such a review should consider input from state animal health officials, United States Department of Agriculture representatives, and industry stakeholders.

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 6 APPROVED

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON SWINE**

SUBJECT MATTER: **Market Haul Sanitation - Updating and Expanding Livestock Truck Wash Facilities in the United States**.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests that the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services and the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program Consultation Board prioritize educational, policy, and funding opportunities, in cooperation with state and pork industry partners, to streamline and expedite investments in the construction, modernization, equipping, and expansion of livestock truck wash facilities throughout the United States.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Livestock trailers returning to farm sites from terminal points of concentration, including slaughter facilities, buying stations, and cull markets, that have not been cleaned and disinfected represent a primary and well-understood risk factor for the indirect recirculation, amplification, and broad distribution of disease-causing agents among United States (US) swine.

The lack of capable, appropriately equipped, and strategically located livestock truck wash facilities specifically designed to support the market-haul segment of the US pork supply chain arguably represents one of the most significant domestic foreign animal disease preparedness vulnerabilities facing the US pork industry. Such infrastructure deficits are also well-recognized contributors to recurring, high-consequence swine health challenges currently affecting US swine.

Substantive investments in constructing, updating, expanding, and equipping modern livestock truck wash facilities are needed to address this well-understood, industry-level vulnerability. Modernizing our nation’s livestock truck wash infrastructure would provide a foundational component for improving the long-term health of US swine and strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of the US pork industry.

The global foreign animal disease landscape and high-consequence endemic viral diseases affecting the health of US swine have continued to evolve significantly. Corresponding industry-level improvements in livestock truck wash infrastructure and biosecurity practices associated with the market-haul transportation of swine are needed to address these evolving risks.

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 7 APPROVED

Source: **COMMITTEE ON EQUINE**

SUBJECT MATTER: **Canada Equine Import Requirements**

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests that the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, Import/Export negotiate with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to implement the following revisions to the import requirements for horses entering Canada from the United States:

- Vesicular Stomatitis (VS): Remove the 21-day prohibition on horses from a VS-affected state and replace it with a requirement for a negative VS complement fixation test for horses from a VS-affected state.
- New World Screwworm (NWS): Remove the 21-day prohibition on horses from an NWS-infested state and replace it with requirements for wound inspection, treatment of any wounds, systemic NWS treatment, certification of inspection within five days prior to entry into Canada, and examination by a veterinarian upon arrival.
- Equine Piroplasmosis (EP): Remove the Texas and New Mexico-specific requirements for equine piroplasmosis testing.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Canadian animal health requirements for equine entry create barriers to equine movement for competition because some requirements are outdated and do not reflect current science or the availability of advanced diagnostic testing. Specifically, Canada prohibits the entry of horses from a vesicular stomatitis (VS)-affected state for 21 days and from a New World screwworm-affected state for 21 days. Canada also requires equine piroplasmosis (EP) testing for horses that have been in Texas or New Mexico.

The World Organisation for Animal Health officially removed vesicular stomatitis from its list of internationally reportable diseases in 2015. To facilitate safe international movement, many countries have reduced their VS-related entry restrictions through the acceptance of a negative complement fixation test (CFT). The CFT is used to identify evidence of recent infection, with positive results persisting for several weeks to a few months.

Regarding New World screwworm, science-based protocols involving inspection, wound treatment, and systemic treatment have been used to facilitate the safe movement of horses from infested areas to free countries. When restrictions are applied, they are based on epidemiological parameters and fly-movement zones rather than political boundaries.

Because the United States is considered free of equine piroplasmosis (EP), occasional detections are generally associated with specific subpopulations. Although there was a historical outbreak of EP in Texas, the outbreak was managed, and there was no recognized persistence of the organism in the tick population. Currently, there is no evidence of a greater persistence of cases in any one geographic area; rather, detections are associated with a specific subpopulation.

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 8 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON EQUINE

SUBJECT MATTER: Publicly Accessible Equine Disease and Import Health Data

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to establish a centralized, publicly accessible Equine Disease Data Dashboard, beginning with equine infectious anemia and modeled on the existing Equine Arbovirus Dashboard. The dashboard should publish aggregated data quarterly according to a consistent, predictable schedule and include, at a minimum, the disease, number of cases and non-negative results, state or region, and reporting period. Data should be available for download in a machine-readable format, and routine aggregated data should be proactively published and maintained in a public archive rather than made available only through Freedom of Information Act requests.

USAHA also urges USDA-APHIS-VS to develop and publish aggregated equine import and export data on a quarterly basis. Export reports should include the number of health certificates issued, purpose of movement, and country of destination. Import reports should provide monthly data, published quarterly, by port of entry, including the total number of horses by country of origin and purpose of entry, as well as non-negative test results for imported horses by disease, port of entry, and purpose of import.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

State animal health officials, veterinarians, and industry stakeholders need timely, aggregated equine disease and import data to identify trends, monitor industry health, and support sound policy decisions. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), maintains much of this information through monthly state reports submitted to the National Animal Health Reporting System, monthly reports from approximately 400 approved equine infectious anemia (EIA) laboratories, import testing conducted by the USDA-APHIS-VS National Veterinary Services Laboratories, and certificates and permits processed for international equine movement.

Public access to these data is limited and inconsistent and, in the case of equine import data, largely absent. Since 2020, USDA-APHIS-VS has reported equine arboviral cases through its interactive Equine Arbovirus Dashboard, demonstrating that routine public reporting is achievable. However, EIA and equine piroplasmosis results appear only in static annual summaries, and the 2024 EIA summary was not released until September 2025, even as USDA reported continued spread among Quarter Horse racehorses. Import and export certificate counts and non-negative import test results are not routinely published. Furthermore, as noted in United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) Resolution 9 of 2024, stakeholders have relied on Freedom of Information Act requests for basic import and export data that USDA-APHIS-VS has been unable to provide. Proactive publication of these data would reduce reliance on this request-driven approach and lessen the associated administrative workload for USDA.

This request reflects USAHA's sustained interest in improving access to federal equine health data, including Resolution 7 of 2024, which requested a comprehensive review of equine import and export services and movement data trends; Resolution 15 of 2022, which addressed the release of contagious equine metritis test results through official channels; and Resolution 19 of 2022, which urged USDA to conduct a new National Animal Health Monitoring System equine study.

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 9 APPROVED

Source: COMMITTEE ON EQUINE

SUBJECT MATTER: National Animal Health Monitoring System Equine Event Study

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association strongly urges the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services to proceed with Phase Two of the Equine Event Study as part of the 2026 National Animal Health Monitoring System Equine Study.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of Agriculture National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) Equine Study provides nationally representative, science-based data on equine health, management, disease occurrence, veterinary care, biosecurity, emergency preparedness, and welfare. These data help the equine industry identify trends and gaps, guide education and research priorities, and align future resources with the needs of United States equine owners and operations.

The proposed 2026 NAHMS Equine Event Study is important because equine events bring together horses from diverse regions, disciplines, and management backgrounds in temporary, high-density settings. An event-focused study would provide needed information on horse movement and event-level practices related to stabling, sanitation, health monitoring, isolation, communication, and emergency response.

The 2025 equine herpes virus-1/ equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy outbreak associated with the Women's Professional Rodeo Association World Finals and Elite Barrel Race in Waco, Texas, demonstrated how quickly a disease event at a large gathering can affect the broader equine industry. The outbreak disrupted competition schedules, travel, venue operations, and communications while creating animal health, economic, and reputational impacts across the barrel racing, rodeo, and broader equine event sectors.

The proposed Event Study would help the industry prepare for and prevent future disease outbreaks by identifying how horses move through events, how facilities manage biosecurity, and where practical disease-prevention gaps exist. By combining event questionnaires with biological and environmental sampling, the study could support earlier detection, development of practical event-specific guidance, improved response planning, and stronger coordination among event managers, veterinarians, regulators, and participants.

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 10 APPROVED

Source: **JOINT COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

SUBJECT MATTER: **Eligibility for all National Animal Health Laboratory Network Approved and American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians Accredited Laboratories to Apply for United States Department of Agriculture National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program funding opportunities**

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) strongly urge the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), to ensure that advancements in diagnostic capabilities and diagnostic laboratory readiness remain foundational components of United States animal health preparedness and response. Therefore, USAHA and AAVLD urge USDA-APHIS-VS to include all National Animal Health Laboratory Network-approved and AAVLD-accredited laboratories, including state and university laboratories, as entities eligible to submit project proposals for consideration under annual competitive funding opportunities by:

1. Maintaining the eligibility criteria from the 2018 Farm Bill National Animal Disease Preparedness Response Plan (NADPRP) funding opportunity to include land-grant universities and other entities eligible to receive funds under a capacity and infrastructure program, as defined in section 251(f)(1)(C) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 United States Code 6971(f)(1)(C)). This includes entities eligible for National Institute of Food and Agriculture federal assistance programs; and/or

2. Providing laboratory-specific priority funding opportunities for projects that advance diagnostic preparedness and response activities; and/or

3. Allowing laboratory-specific projects to be submitted for consideration under the noncompetitive components of the 2026–2027 NADPRP funding opportunity, including ad hoc projects, USDA-APHIS-led projects, and the continuation of past or existing projects.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The 2018 Farm Bill authorized $120 million in mandatory funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 through FY2022 for three programs: the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program (NADPRP), the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), and the National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank (NAVVCB), of which $5 million was reserved for NADPRP. In FY2023 and each fiscal year thereafter, the 2018 Farm Bill provided $30 million in mandatory funding for the three animal health programs, with no less than $18 million designated for NADPRP. Additionally, the 2018 Farm Bill authorized appropriations of $30 million annually for NAHLN from FY2019 through FY2022 and authorized such sums as necessary for NADPRP and NAVVCB through FY2023. The 2018 Farm Bill expired in September 2023 and was extended twice through FY2025.

Working with cooperators, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has leveraged this funding to establish these three programs as critical components of efforts to safeguard United States (US) animal health and strengthen the nation's capabilities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to animal disease outbreaks through a multifaceted approach. Since FY2020, NADPRP has provided nearly $70 million to federal, state, Tribal, university, veterinary association, and industry entities to fund projects supporting animal disease traceability and movement, biosecurity, depopulation, disposal and disinfection, outreach and education, training and exercises, and state and Tribal preparedness, as well as commodity-specific projects involving aquaculture, equine, and sheep and goat vaccines.

The NAHLN, comprising 65 university, state, and federal laboratories, plays a vital role in protecting US livestock, wildlife, and public health by providing rapid diagnostic testing, early disease detection, and surge capacity during foreign animal disease outbreaks, routine national surveillance activities, and public health emergencies. Since FY2020, 104 NAHLN-specific projects, totaling $22 million, have been funded through Farm Bill funds, demonstrating the crucial role veterinary diagnostic laboratories play in supporting preparedness and response. These projects have included test method development and validation; advancements in information technology standardization, electronic messaging, and data management; increased capacity for disease testing and surge sample handling; and overall enhancements to laboratory emergency preparedness.

Beginning in FY2026, the One Big Beautiful Bill provides an approximately eightfold increase in annual funding for these three programs, totaling $233 million: $153 million per year for NAVVCB, $70 million per year for NADPRP, and $10 million per year for NAHLN. In late 2025, USDA hosted listening sessions to gather stakeholder input on how the new funds should be used to strengthen national, regional, and local capabilities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to animal disease outbreaks. One common theme expressed by stakeholders was the need to ensure coordination between the NADPRP and NAHLN Farm Bill programs to advance diagnostic capabilities and laboratory preparedness.

In FY2026, the $10 million for NAHLN was distributed among member laboratories as part of the annual infrastructure agreements that support NAHLN laboratories' operational expenses, resulting in a moderate increase in funding (e.g., 16% for Level 1 laboratories). Diagnostic

laboratories have experienced significant increases in the costs of equipment, supplies, reagents, service contracts, and staffing. The network appreciates this increase, which is critical to addressing the continually rising costs of daily laboratory operations. However, $10 million of the total $233 million represents only 4.3% of the funding available for laboratory preparedness and response activities. Excluding the $153 million designated for NAVVCB, the $10 million allocated to NAHLN represents 12.5% of the remaining $80 million.

Limiting eligible entities under NADPRP to state, regional, and industry applicants that may subaward funds to certain NAHLN-approved and American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians-accredited laboratories raises concerns about inefficiencies because institution-mandated indirect costs could potentially increase the overall cost of projects. This approach also presents practical challenges because some state animal health and industry organizations may lack the resources, capacity, and infrastructure necessary to manage multiple subawards under large agreements. Conversely, universities have established capabilities, systems, and staff to manage such agreements.

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 11 APPROVED

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON ONE HEALTH**

SUBJECT MATTER: **Fiscal Year 2028 Funding Request for National Zoonotic Rabies Surveillance and Case Reporting in the United States**

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the 120th Congress appropriate a minimum of $15 million annually to the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Poxvirus and Rabies Branch (PRB) at a level sufficient to maintain national rabies surveillance and reporting in the United States. USAHA further urges Congress and other public health stakeholders to support the use of these appropriated funds by HHS-CDC-PRB to protect United States citizens from this deadly zoonotic disease.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Poxvirus and Rabies Branch (PRB) is the core team responsible for national rabies surveillance, data reporting, and risk mitigation in the United States (US). Rabies is a high-consequence pathogen and one of the most common infectious zoonotic diseases that state and local health departments confront on an ongoing basis. More than 6 million Americans report animal bites each year, with 1.6 million seeking medical care. Approximately 4,000 animal rabies cases are reported annually, 90 percent of which occur in wildlife, and more than 130 laboratories test nearly 100,000 animals for rabies each year.

In 2025, HHS-CDC rabies experts responded to more than 1,700 inquiries to HHS-CDC's Rabies Hotline from 50 states and 83 countries. Federally funded rabies control programs contribute to approximately $46 billion in annual savings through deaths prevented and avoided health care and hospital costs. These programs also align with the National Biodefense Strategy, the National One Health Framework, and the National Rabies Management Plan. The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) recognizes the crucial role that HHS-CDC-PRB plays in protecting US citizens and domestic animals against rabies.

HHS-CDC-PRB's primary objective is managing the National Rabies Surveillance System. It maintains the only globally recognized US reference laboratory for rabies diagnostics.

HHS-CDC supports infectious disease programs through initiatives such as the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity Program and the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases.

HHS-CDC-PRB serves as a key resource for state and local health departments, acting as their sole federal agency partner in human and animal rabies case surveillance, diagnostic testing, and post-exposure prophylaxis guidelines. The subject matter expertise HHS-CDC-PRB provides to state and local health jurisdictions is also vital to accurately assessing human rabies exposures. HHS-CDC-PRB tracks outbreaks, identifies emerging rabies threats to humans and livestock, and serves as the primary expert consultative resource on rabies for the medical community. HHS-CDC-PRB also educates the public on rabies exposure protocols, oversees the importation of dogs into the US from rabies-endemic countries, and provides accurate information about wildlife exposures, including bat exposures.

The duties performed by HHS-CDC-PRB are critical to protecting US citizens from this deadly disease. The requested level of funding would:

1. Stabilize staffing and support other resources required to provide continuous, 24/7 consultations with medical professionals managing human rabies exposures.

2. Facilitate the establishment of a Rabies Center of Excellence to coordinate laboratory partners across the US as a network capable of effectively managing rabies outbreaks and resulting surges in laboratory testing.

3. Facilitate hands-on training and mentoring for the next generation of rabies scientists and laboratory personnel at the state, local, and tribal levels, as these individuals are often the first to detect new rabies cases and serve on the front lines of defense against onward transmission.

4. Allow for the creation of a 24-hour rabies case-reporting hotline to close gaps in the current rabies surveillance network and provide public access to essential rabies educational materials.

5. Strengthen efforts to prevent the importation of rabid dogs from canine rabies-endemic countries into the US.

6. Facilitate travel alerts and pre-exposure vaccination recommendations for US travelers abroad.

Together, these efforts focus on reducing rabies exposures among US citizens, domestic animals, and livestock and preventing the need for costly medical interventions.

USAHA urges members of the 120th Congress to appropriate no less than $15 million for national rabies prevention efforts conducted by HHS-CDC-PRB, the primary federal institution for rabies prevention and control in the United States.

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 12 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON ONE HEALTH

SUBJECT MATTER: Fiscal Year 2028 Funding for the National Rabies Management Program, United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services to Maintain Rabies Surveillance, Oral Rabies Vaccination Programs, and Rabies Case Reporting

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the 120th Congress appropriate a minimum of $38 million annually to the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services, for the National Rabies Management Program. USAHA further urges Congress and other stakeholders to maintain funding at levels sufficient to support continued rabies surveillance and management efforts in the United States.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Rabies is the most lethal zoonotic disease worldwide, with a human case-fatality rate of approximately 100 percent. In the United States (US), the virus persists in wildlife reservoir species, with spillover into humans and domestic animals. It is the only disease globally proven to be preventable at scale through repeated vaccination of humans, domestic animals, and wildlife.

The National Rabies Management Program (NRMP), administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS), has demonstrated that the strategic implementation of cooperative, multistate oral rabies vaccination (ORV) programs targeting wildlife reservoir species in the US is cost-effective in reducing rabies virus transmission. These efforts protect human and animal health and lower the cost of living in geographic areas affected by wildlife rabies.

In the US, more than 90 percent of annually reported rabies cases occur in wildlife. ORV programs are designed to immunize targeted wildlife species by increasing the percentage of rabies-immune wild animals within vaccination zones. This results in a reduction in wildlife rabies cases and spillover into domestic species, thereby preventing viral spread (Phase 1 goal of the NRMP) and ultimately leading to the geographical elimination of

specific rabies virus variants (Phase 2 goal of the NRMP). Since 1995, this comprehensive rabies management strategy has been cooperatively developed with federal, state, provincial, and local partners to prevent the spread of the raccoon rabies virus variant.

The primary raccoon rabies management area of USDA-APHIS-WS-NRMP includes regions within 13 eastern states. Management efforts in these states have prevented the further spread of raccoon rabies beyond the eastern seaboard by establishing an ORV zone from Maine to Ohio along the Canadian border and from Ohio to Alabama. The USDA-APHIS-WS National Wildlife Research Center estimates that these actions help avoid more than $58 million in annual raccoon rabies-related costs.

The USDA-APHIS-WS-NRMP also collaborates with the Texas Department of State Health Services to conduct an annual ORV program along the Texas-Mexico border that eliminated the dog-coyote rabies variant and the Texas gray fox rabies variant from the US. In 2027, baiting efforts in Texas will include a new ORV zone in central Texas near San Antonio and Austin targeting a new rabies virus variant emerging in gray foxes.

The USDA-APHIS-WS-NRMP has been essentially level-funded since 2018 at approximately $28 million annually, while both expected costs, such as personnel salaries and benefits, and unexpected costs have continued to rise. Examples of unexpected cost increases in Fiscal Year (FY)26 include a 7 percent increase in ORV bait costs (approximately $386,000), a 13% increase in helicopter distribution costs (approximately $64,000), and a 57 percent increase in Jet-A fuel costs for fixed-wing bait distribution (approximately $319,000). Fuel costs alone are expected to increase considerably in FY27.

As costs continue to rise without corresponding increases in funding, fewer USDA-APHIS-WS-NRMP resources can be devoted to critical rabies prevention measures, such as vaccine bait distribution, potentially resulting in a higher incidence of rabies in endemic areas. Without corresponding increases in annual appropriations in line with rising operational costs, USDA-APHIS-WS-NRMP anticipates a heightened risk of wildlife rabies transmission, which could lead to additional cases in humans and domestic animals and pose a threat to human health and safety.

The requested $38 million in funding for USDA-APHIS-WS would help ensure that US rabies control efforts remain functional and effective as a critical public safety network for rabies prevention and surveillance. This funding would support USDA-APHIS-WS personnel conducting enhanced rabies surveillance, personnel training, rabies laboratory testing, ORV bait distribution, and field responses to rabid animals detected in critical at-risk areas. It would also support the USDA-APHIS-WS-NRMP Phase 2 operational goal of eliminating the raccoon rabies virus variant from the US.

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 13 APPROVED AS AMENDED

SOURCE: **JOINT COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

SUBJECT MATTER: **United States Department of Agriculture Rural Veterinary Action Plan**

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) support the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Veterinary Action Plan (RVAP) and urge the Secretary of Agriculture to expeditiously implement and sustain the actions identified in the Plan.

USAHA and AAVLD further request that USDA establish an annual public RVAP Implementation and Accountability Report, or equivalent scorecard, addressing all five RVAP action areas and identifying, for each, actions completed, actions underway, actions not yet initiated, responsible agencies, milestones and deadlines, funding and authorities, measurable outputs and outcomes, and administrative, statutory, budgetary, or other barriers to implementation.

The annual report should include measures of progress important to rural practitioners, producers, state animal health officials, veterinary diagnostic laboratories, and animal agriculture, including grant-program outcomes; actions taken in response to USDA Economic Research Service findings on rural veterinary shortages; progress toward a veterinarian-specific federal rural-practice resource catalog or equivalent public resource; stakeholder recommendations received through RVAP engagement activities and USDA's responses to those recommendations; and identification of actions USDA can complete under existing authority and those requiring additional statutory authority, appropriations, or other congressional action.

USAHA and AAVLD further request that USDA report on the public veterinary infrastructure needed to support rural practice and animal agriculture, including federal veterinary workforce capacity within the USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Reporting should include GS-0701 authorized positions, number of current filled positions, vacancies and vacancy duration, attrition, retirement eligibility, time to hire, use of recruitment and retention incentives, hard-to-fill locations, and measurable staffing goals and timelines. USDA should also provide specific information on the implementation status of veterinarian compensation actions, including any special salary rate or equivalent pay

proposal, the responsible office, scope, review stage, outstanding data requirements, expected decision points, and final disposition, as applicable.

USAHA and AAVLD urge USDA to continue meaningful consultation with USAHA, AAVLD, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the National Association of Federal Veterinarians, state animal health officials, colleges of veterinary medicine, veterinary diagnostic laboratories, practicing food-animal veterinarians, livestock and poultry organizations, producer groups, and other appropriate stakeholders as implementation proceeds.

USAHA and AAVLD request that USDA provide the annual RVAP Implementation and Accountability Report to USAHA and AAVLD until the principal objectives have been implemented and measurable improvements have been demonstrated in rural veterinary access, shortage-area recruitment and retention, and the state and federal veterinary capacity that supports animal agriculture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In August 2025, United States (US) Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins announced the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Veterinary Action Plan (RVAP), which outlines actions to increase the availability of food-animal veterinarians in rural communities and strengthen the recruitment and retention of veterinarians within USDA.

A robust and appropriately distributed veterinary workforce is essential to US animal health, food safety, agricultural productivity, and the availability and quality of the food supply. Veterinarians play critical roles in disease prevention, surveillance, diagnosis, and response; biosecurity; food-safety systems; regulatory activities; and the domestic and international movement of animals and animal products.

Shortages of veterinarians in rural food-animal practice and key government positions create vulnerabilities across this system. Inadequate veterinary capacity can delay disease detection and response, limit producers' access to essential services, constrain surveillance and regulatory functions, and increase risks to animal health, food production, public health, and trade. These concerns are heightened by emerging and transboundary animal diseases, zoonotic threats, foodborne disease, and increasing demands on the US food-production system.

USDA's *Rural Veterinary Action Plan* addresses these challenges through five principal actions:

1. Enhance and Streamline Veterinary Grant Programs
USDA has been working to strengthen the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) and Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP), including by streamlining applications and increasing support for programs designed to address veterinary shortage situations. These programs can help reduce financial barriers to rural food-animal practice and support sustainable veterinary services in underserved communities.

2. Analyze Rural Veterinary Shortages to Better Understand the Need
To provide the workforce data needed to identify areas of greatest need and inform federal, state, and local policy decisions, USDA directed its Economic Research Service (ERS) to further evaluate rural veterinary shortages. This effort resulted in USDA ERS's September 2026 report,

Food-animal Veterinarians and the Persistence of Rural Shortage Areas.

The report documents that shortages of food-animal and mixed-animal veterinarians remain persistent and localized across rural America, with implications for animal health, farm viability, food safety, disease preparedness, and supply-chain resilience. In 2024, 69 percent of areas designated for USDA's VMLRP remained unfilled, and 59 percent received no applications from veterinarians seeking loan-repayment support to serve those areas.

USDA ERS also identified economic pressures in rural practice, including declines in practice revenue and real veterinarian income, and noted that retirements can have an outsized effect in communities served by few practitioners. At the same time, rural residents are represented among veterinary-school applicants roughly in proportion to their share of the US population, suggesting that the challenge extends beyond attracting rural students to veterinary medicine and includes recruitment, training pathways, practice economics, and retention in food-animal practice.

Together, these findings provide an evidence base for USDA's *Rural Veterinary Action Plan*, reinforcing its focus on strengthening and streamlining veterinary grant and loan-repayment programs, better identifying where shortages occur and why they persist, improving recruitment and retention, supporting sustainable rural practices, and working with veterinary schools and other stakeholders to address barriers to food-animal careers.

3. Recruit and Retain USDA Veterinarians
Veterinarians within USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service, and other programs perform mission-critical functions in disease surveillance and response, inspection, import and export activities, regulatory medicine, animal health, and food safety.

Persistent vacancies, particularly in rural assignments, inspection positions, ports of entry, and export certification roles, can limit USDA's ability to carry out these responsibilities. The Plan identifies strategies to address these vacancies, including improved salary rates, enhanced tuition reimbursement, recruitment incentives, and partnerships with veterinary schools and other stakeholders.

4. Catalog Federal Resources Available to Veterinarians for Establishing Rural Practices
Establishing or expanding a rural veterinary practice may require significant investment in facilities, equipment, vehicles, and personnel, particularly for graduates carrying substantial educational debt. USDA plans to catalog federal financing and assistance programs that may help veterinarians establish and sustain practices in underserved communities.

5. Work with Stakeholders to Strengthen the Rural Veterinary Workforce Pipeline
USDA intends to work with veterinary schools, producers, communities, professional organizations, and other stakeholders to better understand barriers to rural and food-animal practice and identify opportunities to improve recruitment and retention.

Strengthening this pipeline requires attention to the full continuum of workforce development, including recruitment into veterinary education, clinical training and mentorship, financial and practice support, and long-term career sustainability.

At the one-year point, publicly available information shows meaningful but uneven implementation of the RVAP. Grant-program activity and the completion of USDA ERS's rural veterinary shortage analysis are visible milestones, while important questions remain about whether shortage communities are gaining and retaining veterinarians, whether rural practices are receiving the promised federal resource support, how stakeholder recommendations are being acted upon, and how the federal veterinary workforce is being strengthened.

Rural private practitioners, state animal health officials, veterinary diagnostic laboratories, livestock and poultry industries, and federal veterinarians form an interconnected animal-health infrastructure. Capacity in each part of that system affects access to veterinary care, regulatory programs, disease surveillance, early recognition of emerging and foreign animal diseases, continuity of agricultural production, and emergency response.

Effective implementation, therefore, requires transparent measures of progress across all five RVAP action areas. Annual reporting should identify milestones, responsible agencies, deadlines, funding and authorities, outputs, outcomes, and barriers so that USDA, Congress, states, industry, and veterinary stakeholders can determine whether the RVAP is measurably improving veterinary access and animal-health capacity.

Prompt and accountable implementation of the *Rural Veterinary Action Plan* will help deliver the veterinary capacity needed to protect animal health, support producers, safeguard the food supply, respond to emerging disease threats, and maintain confidence in US agricultural products and trade.

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 14 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON POULTRY AND OTHER AVIAN SPECIES

SUBJECT MATTER: Development of Bilateral Trade Agreements Supporting the Strategic Use of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Vaccination in Poultry

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), in coordination with the Office of the United States Trade Representative and other appropriate federal agencies, proactively engage major United States (US) poultry and poultry-product trading partners in bilateral technical discussions to establish mutually acceptable conditions under which vaccination against H5 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) could be implemented in the US without unnecessary disruption to international trade.

USAHA further requests that these discussions address, as appropriate:

1. Recognition of HPAI vaccination programs consistent with World Organisation for Animal Health standards and contemporary scientific evidence;

2. Surveillance and diagnostic requirements capable of demonstrating infection status in vaccinated populations;

3. Certification requirements for poultry and poultry products originating from vaccinated populations;

4. Recognition of regionalization, zoning, and compartmentalization approaches that permit continued trade from unaffected populations and regions;

5. Identification of poultry commodities and products that can continue to be safely traded from vaccinated populations based on scientifically supported animal-health risk assessments; and

6. Development, wherever practicable, of bilateral protocols before vaccination is implemented so that trade conditions are established in advance of vaccination

becoming necessary as part of an HPAI response or long-term disease-control strategy.

USAHA further requests that USDA report to the USAHA Committee on Poultry and Other Avian Species at its 2027 Annual Meeting on progress in these bilateral discussions and in the development of trade protocols.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The continuing global H5 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) panzootic has challenged the sustainability of disease-control strategies based primarily on detection, quarantine, depopulation, disposal, cleaning and disinfection, and indemnification.

Since the emergence and widespread establishment of HPAI in wild bird populations, United States (US) poultry have experienced repeated introductions despite extensive investments by government and industry in surveillance and biosecurity. These circumstances warrant continued evaluation of additional disease-control tools, including vaccination.

One of the principal concerns surrounding vaccination of US commercial poultry has been its potential effect on international trade. Trading partners may impose restrictions on poultry or poultry products from countries employing vaccination because of concerns regarding surveillance, detection of infection in vaccinated populations, or disease status. These concerns should be addressed proactively rather than waiting until an animal health emergency requires the rapid implementation of vaccination. International animal health standards recognize tools, including surveillance, zoning, regionalization, compartmentalization, certification, and risk-based commodity approaches, that can help maintain safe trade while animal diseases are controlled.

The US is a major producer and exporter of poultry and poultry products. Consequently, development of a vaccination strategy should proceed in parallel with the development of an international trade strategy. Proactive bilateral negotiations between the United States Department of Agriculture and major trading partners could establish agreed-upon surveillance, certification, vaccination, and trade conditions before vaccination is implemented. Doing so would provide greater certainty to producers, trading partners, animal health officials, and markets while preserving vaccination as an available disease-control tool.

The objective of this resolution is not to mandate HPAI vaccination but rather to ensure that international trade concerns do not prevent the US from having vaccination available as a practical component of an evolving HPAI control strategy. Targeted and effective HPAI vaccination, coupled with appropriate surveillance, offers wide-reaching benefits for producers, animal disease responders, veterinarians, public health, worker safety, food security, the environment, biodiversity, and animal welfare.

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 15 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON POULTRY AND OTHER AVIAN SPECIES

SUBJECT MATTER: Request for Progress on the United States Department of Agriculture Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Poultry Vaccination Strategy

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RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) release a draft highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) poultry vaccination strategy for public comment before the end of 2026. USAHA further requests that USDA stress-test the draft strategy by working with the egg and turkey industries and other appropriate stakeholders to conduct: (1) a tabletop exercise that addresses, among other issues, traceability and the movement of vaccines and vaccinated birds across jurisdictions; (2) a pilot commercial turkey vaccination project; and (3) a pilot commercial egg-layer vaccination project. Lessons learned from the tabletop exercise and pilot projects can be used to inform a final strategy to be issued publicly by the end of 2027.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has become endemic in United States (US) wild bird populations and routinely results in incursions into commercial poultry operations. HPAI has caused illness and the depopulation of more than 206,253,164 commercial and backyard birds. Of this total, 161,807,500 table egg chickens and 22,737,760 turkeys have been depopulated from 2022 to the present.[1]

The US HPAI prevention and response strategy has not changed to meet this new reality. Rather than continuing to rely on biosecurity and stamping out alone, incorporating an appropriate vaccination strategy can improve animal welfare, prevent human infections, reduce environmental contamination and lateral spread, safeguard food security and growers' livelihoods, and protect the health and psychological well-being of farmers and HPAI responders.

[1] USDA APHIS. Confirmations of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Commercial and Backyard Flocks. https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/commercial-backyard-flocks

Numerous lawmakers have called upon the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to prioritize a vaccination strategy.[2] In addition, in 2025, USAHA passed a resolution encouraging the Secretary of Agriculture to provide the US poultry industry with its plan for "next steps toward an H5 influenza vaccination strategy (e.g., surveillance plans) in poultry."[3]

USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) responded that the use of HPAI vaccines is not authorized but that USDA-APHIS is exploring strategies to address HPAI, "including possible vaccination and other emerging approaches," and that "APHIS has gathered input from domestic stakeholders on the feasibility, costs, and other considerations associated with potential strategies under development." USDA-APHIS stated that the agency shared a draft vaccination strategy with state animal health officials and a limited number of industry partners for review and comment and that their feedback was incorporated into a second draft, which would be shared "more broadly once the Secretary of Agriculture authorizes wider distribution."
In December 2025, 23 senators sent a bipartisan letter to the Secretary urging her department to advance the strategy review process "with speed and diligence." As we approach the end of 2026, the second draft remains unreleased. The lack of a broadly available plan, including one available to the public, has limited stakeholders' ability to engage productively with USDA and advance viable solutions to the challenges of implementing a poultry vaccination program.

Numerous practical issues related to implementation remain unresolved, including appropriate planning for interstate controls; the movement of vaccines and vaccinated birds across jurisdictions; the international management of products from vaccinated and unvaccinated birds; and traceability within the poultry industry. The turkey industry has limited data to inform planning; therefore, a pilot vaccination effort and tabletop exercise designed to identify implementation challenges could inform the finalization and publication of the strategy. Decision-making triggers addressing whether, when, and how to implement a vaccination plan could also be incorporated into the strategy.

[2] U.S. Senate members to the Honorable Brooke Rollins regarding an avian influenza vaccination strategy, December 11, 2025; U.S. Senate members to the Honorable Brooke Rollins regarding the department's HPAI response, February 18, 2025; U.S. House of Representatives members to the Honorable Brooke Rollins regarding the department's HPAI response, February 18, 2025.

[3] U.S. Animal Health Association. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Update. Committee on Poultry and Other Avian Species. 2025. https://usaha.org/usaha-resolutions/#:~:text=Secretary%20of%20Agriculture-,12,-Approved

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 16 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: Disease Response and Indemnity for Captive Furbearers

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests that the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Farm Service Agency add domestic mink, chinchillas, sables, red foxes, and rabbits to the list of livestock species eligible for disease-response resources and indemnity for losses resulting from foreign and emerging animal diseases.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

While the fur industry has declined in recent years, farms producing fur still exist in many states. Captive species raised for fur include mink, chinchillas, sables, foxes, and rabbits. Mink farms dominate the industry, with an estimated 70 to 100 mink farms remaining in the United States. Commercial mink farms have historically operated in 22 states, with Wisconsin and Utah having the largest numbers of farms.

The value of mink pelt production varies annually but is currently estimated at $85 million per year, based on the production of approximately 1,000,000 pelts at an average value of $85 each, according to Fur Commission USA. Pelt values vary by color, and breeding stock carries additional value, with male breeder mink currently valued at approximately $350 each and female breeder mink at approximately $200 each.

Despite the mink industry generating millions of dollars annually, mink are not considered livestock by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) or the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and, therefore, are not eligible for compensation for losses due to foreign animal diseases such as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Programs such as the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) are designed to provide financial compensation to livestock owners who experience livestock losses exceeding normal mortality levels. Mink are not considered eligible livestock for LIP or ELAP.

Cases of HPAI and SARS-CoV-2 in mink demonstrate the potentially devastating effects of these diseases on mink and other carnivores; however, the risks these diseases pose to public and animal health once introduced onto a mink farm are not fully understood. SARS-CoV-2 killed up to 50 percent of breeder mink on affected farms. An H5N1 outbreak in Spain in 2022 infected more than 50,000 mink and provided evidence of mammal-to-mammal transmission of the virus. No human cases were associated with the outbreak, and the animals were destroyed.[1]

Producers who are eligible to receive compensation for their losses, regardless of species, may be more likely to report disease outbreaks and work with state animal health officials to implement biosecurity practices and other measures to reduce the risk of disease spread. For foreign animal and emerging diseases, cooperation among all parties is critical to controlling and containing outbreaks. Excluding susceptible production species from compensation programs and other response resources may hinder animal health officials' ability to effectively manage disease outbreaks.

[1] Agüero Montserrat, et al. *Highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N1) virus infection in farmed minks, Spain, October 2022.* Euro Surveill. 2023;28(3):pii=2300001. https://doi.org/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2023.28.3.2300001

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.

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 18 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: Approval of Cow's Milk as a Sample Type for Foot and Mouth Disease Testing with Use Case and Corresponding Response Actions in an Outbreak

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), to:

1. Develop, validate, approve, and maintain the capability to test cow milk samples using real-time reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction testing for official foot and mouth disease surveillance during an outbreak; and

2. Define the intended uses, limitations, testing strategies, result interpretation, confirmatory testing requirements, and regulatory response actions associated with presumptive-positive (also referred to as non-negative) and not-detected milk test results from USDA-APHIS-VS National Animal Health Laboratory Network laboratories, recognizing that a non-negative bulk milk test result, by itself, does not confirm an infected premises.

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 (NMPF) 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 (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), National Animal Disease Preparedness and

Response Program, identifies operational needs for using milk surveillance during an FMD response. The NMPF white paper identifies the following key gaps:

- Cow's milk is not currently an approved sample type for FMD rRT-PCR testing, despite validation of the test for other diagnostic sample types. Pre-outbreak performance data would strengthen preparedness, support rapid implementation, and inform future USDA use of bulk milk testing.
- A clear national policy for FMD milk surveillance does not exist. Such a policy is needed to define intended uses, limitations, testing strategies, interpretation of results, confirmatory testing requirements, and regulatory response actions associated with USDA-APHIS, Veterinary Services, National Animal Health Laboratory Network milk test results. The policy should also explicitly distinguish between presumptive-positive (also referred to as non-negative) and not-detected results; clarify that a presumptive-positive bulk milk result alone does not confirm an infected premises; and ensure that such results trigger appropriate investigation and confirmatory testing.

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, efficient response and limit disease spread. These systems should be developed, funded, and exercised before an FMD outbreak occurs.

The NMPF white paper proposes an Animal Health Surveillance Milk 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. It also recommends memoranda of agreement, or equivalent arrangements, between state animal health and dairy regulatory agencies so that existing milk samples can be rapidly accessed for official testing without jurisdictional delays.

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 USDA-APHIS National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program. The contents may not necessarily represent the views of USDA-APHIS.

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 19 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: 72-Hour National Movement Standstill

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) recommends that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), consider the following changes to the USDA-APHIS-VS Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) 72-Hour National Movement Standstill:

1. Exempt bovine and swine semen and embryos (germplasm) from National Movement Standstill requirements;

2. Prohibit the movement of deadstock off livestock premises during a National Movement Standstill; and

3. Remove the detection of FMD in wildlife as a trigger for a National Movement Standstill and, instead, address such a detection through the establishment of a control area or other appropriate geographic zone.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The current draft United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) requirements for a foot and mouth disease (FMD) 72-Hour National Movement Standstill are reproduced below:

“For a period of 72 hours, effective [XXX xx, XXXX, XX:00 a./p.m. Eastern Standard/Daylight Time, the intrastate and interstate transportation of the following, from any location in the contiguous United States, is prohibited:

All movements of susceptible animals that are in progress when a national/regional movement standstill is announced should continue to move to their intended destinations. Destination premises should accept all movements of susceptible animals that are in progress at the time of the national standstill notice; this should be supported by states and industry. Reverting animals or returning them to the origin poses serious animal welfare and logistical issues.

Exceptions may be made for critical movements. USDA-APHIS and state officials will determine the characteristics and requirements for these movements (an example would be animals scheduled to move to slaughter within four hours of the movement standstill being announced). USDA-APHIS and state officials may also approve critical movements of personnel or vehicle movements in a control area or onto and off of an infected premises for delivery of feed or veterinary care, for example.

A national/regional movement standstill notice does not affect movement of milk. Premises may continue moving milk to processing. All premises moving milk must implement, monitor, and enforce their premises biosecurity plans to reduce the risk of FMD introduction. States may choose to implement additional or alternative guidance for premises needing to move milk. Live swine, cattle, sheep and goats in transport to Canada will not be permitted to cross the border and should return to point of origin."

One of the key purposes of the standstill order is to prevent further spread of FMD while additional cases are identified. It is important to continually review the requirements of the standstill order to ensure that movement restrictions appropriately address the risk of disease spread.

Semen and embryos (germplasm) originate from some of the most biosecure facilities in the livestock industry. A movement standstill for germplasm could result in adverse production consequences without a corresponding reduction in the risk of FMD spread.

- Resolutions 11 and 12, passed in 2023, provide additional background supporting the exemption of bovine germplasm from an FMD national movement standstill. These resolutions include risk-assessment data and scientific evidence from FMD research conducted globally.

- Resolution 20, passed in 2022, provides additional background supporting the exemption of swine germplasm from an African swine fever (ASF) national movement standstill. A proactive risk assessment of swine germplasm evaluated biosecurity practices and exposure-mitigation measures for ASF.

The removal of deadstock from a facility using vehicles and equipment that move between livestock operations could contribute to disease spread. Because FMD can cause mortality in nursing animals and the virus can remain viable in dead tissue and bodily fluids, moving deadstock using equipment shared among livestock operations or transporting deadstock to a common disposal site could increase the risk of FMD spread.

In the United States, wildlife generally live within established geographic home ranges, although movement patterns vary by species. As such, FMD detection in wildlife may present a different transmission risk than infection within livestock production systems and networks. In addition, wildlife are not part of normal livestock production systems or networks.

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

130th Annual Meeting
October 15-21, 2026
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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 20 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON FOOD AND FEED SAFETY

SUBJECT MATTER: Protecting Animal Health Through Secure Vitamin and Amino Acid Supply Chains

RESOLUTION

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), in coordination with relevant federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services, designate essential vitamins, amino acids, and their critical precursors as materials critical to national defense under the Defense Production Act and pursue appropriate authorities to strengthen the security and resilience of their supply chains.

The USAHA further urges USDA to work across the federal government and with animal agriculture, state departments of agriculture, and the animal food industry to assess supply vulnerabilities, preserve and expand domestic manufacturing capacity, support research and development, diversify supply sources through trusted trading partners, and establish coordinated monitoring and contingency plans. These efforts should ensure reliable and affordable access to essential nutrients while additional domestic production capacity is developed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Vitamins and amino acids are essential to animal health, growth, reproduction, and productivity. Reliable access to these nutrients is necessary to produce nutritionally adequate feed and maintain a secure United States (US) food supply.

US animal agriculture relies heavily on imported vitamins and amino acids, with production concentrated in China and limited domestic capacity for many essential inputs. Research conducted by the Institute for Feed Education and Research found that, from 2020 through 2024, 76.5 percent of US vitamin imports originated in China. In fact, the US is entirely dependent on China for vitamin D3, lysine, and many precursors. Any disruption to these supplies could negatively affect the health, welfare, and productivity of production animals and companion animals. This dependence creates a vulnerability that requires proactive federal and state attention.

Strengthening domestic production, diversifying reliable sources, and preparing for potential shortages would help protect animal health and US food security.

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution
130th Annual Meeting
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Madison, WI

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 21 APPROVED AS AMENDED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON WILDLIFE

SUBJECT MATTER: Access to Technology Used to Generate Genomically Estimated Breeding Values for Chronic Wasting Disease

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) work directly with USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services' National Wildlife Research Center and the USDA Agricultural Research Service to develop in-house laboratory and analytical capacity to independently perform genetic analyses related to chronic wasting disease (CWD) susceptibility, including genomically estimated breeding values (GEBVs) and prion protein gene genotyping.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

It is well known that genetic variation in the prion protein gene (*PRNP*) of cervids influences chronic wasting disease (CWD) pathobiology. For example, findings from multiple research groups have demonstrated that genetic variation in *PRNP* (e.g., at codon 96) in white-tailed deer influences CWD infection and disease progression. Specifically, white-tailed deer homozygous for serine at codon 96 (i.e., 96SS) have reduced susceptibility to CWD, an extended incubation period, and delayed disease progression relative to wild-type deer (i.e., those homozygous for glycine at codon 96; 96GG). Similar relationships between the host prion protein, encoded by *PRNP*, and prion infection exist across multiple prion diseases, and these relationships have been leveraged in disease control programs in conjunction with strong surveillance and culling strategies, such as the scrapie eradication program. However, no *PRNP* genotype provides complete resistance to CWD.

The lack of a fully resistant *PRNP* genotype has led to the exploration of other genes and the development of genomically estimated breeding values (GEBVs), which have been widely promoted for their potential to predict CWD status and aid in CWD control and prevention. Currently, CWD-specific GEBV scores can be obtained only through the North American Deer Registry from a single researcher funded by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS). This researcher has indicated that USDA will not be permitted to access his data or the genetic array used in the development of the GEBV (see Tabor et al. 2024). This

limited access has prevented the broader scientific community from adequately and independently replicating or further investigating this research. As such, the lack of access limits progress toward addressing a prior United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) resolution passed in 2024 (USAHA Resolution 21, *Controlled Study to Evaluate Genetic Influence on CWD in White-tailed Deer*), which called for additional scientific investigation of GEBVs before their use in a management framework. Despite the lack of transparency and the need for additional research, programs using GEBVs to inform breeding decisions for the management of farmed white-tailed deer operations are being pursued by state and federal agricultural agencies, universities, and producers. Despite significant federal financial support for this work through USDA-APHIS-VS *Farmed Cervid CWD Management and Response Activities Cooperative Agreements* (approximately $10.7 million from 2021 through 2025, representing 48 percent of such funding), prion scientists and federal and state agency personnel do not have independent access to the technology.

While the original goal of investigating GEBVs was to reduce CWD risk in farmed white-tailed deer, the effectiveness of applying GEBVs within a national CWD management and regulatory framework has not been thoroughly investigated. Furthermore, despite the lack of evidence supporting the application of GEBVs in free-ranging white-tailed deer, legislation has been passed in Oklahoma allowing the release of farmed deer with specific genetic profiles (i.e., 96SS and GEBV < -0.056) into the wild. Additional lobbying and legislative efforts have occurred in other jurisdictions seeking to incorporate GEBVs into CWD management frameworks for farmed cervids. The momentum behind predictive genetics as a CWD management and prevention tool in white-tailed deer is based on two proof-of-concept studies partially funded by USDA-APHIS-VS; however, the lack of transparency and the inability of independent researchers to access the underlying GEBV methodology have limited independent scientific evaluation. Independent researchers have not been able to replicate the work or use GEBV scores in study designs to further investigate the potential utility of GEBVs. For this tool to be properly evaluated for potential use in a national regulatory and management framework, it must be more broadly accessible for independent scientific investigation.

Greater access to the analytical tools, including the specific single-nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) array, and the algorithmic tools used to generate GEBVs would facilitate diverse research approaches to investigating the utility of GEBVs and would increase scientific transparency and trust.

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

130th Annual Meeting
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Madison, WI

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 22 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON WILDLIFE

SUBJECT MATTER: Release of Funding to Update the United States Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center Research and Diagnostic Laboratories

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of the Interior to proceed with construction of the new United States Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center, for which funding has already been apportioned.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) is operated by the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) and is the only Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) facility within DOI dedicated exclusively to the scientific investigation of wildlife diseases that may threaten human and animal health. The NWHC plays a critical role in diagnostic and epidemiologic investigations of wildlife mortality events, the characterization of wildlife diseases, and the development of tools that enable natural resource managers to address wildlife health challenges. The NWHC is an affiliate laboratory of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network and a World Organisation for Animal Health Collaborating Centre for Research, Diagnosis, and Surveillance of Wildlife Pathogens. The NWHC is registered with and inspected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Federal Select Agent Program. Built in approximately 1960, the NWHC facility has reached the end of its usable life despite continual upgrades.

In 2021, USGS was congressionally directed to provide $55.5 million in initial funding for the NWHC major infrastructure project (Public Law 116-260). The construction project has been fully funded through a combination of congressionally mandated funding and the USGS Lifecycle Infrastructure Program (LIP). The project is the highest priority in the USGS five-year LIP plan. A contract for the design of the new facility was awarded in 2022, and the design was completed in 2025. The final Environmental Impact Statement was published in 2024, and the Record of Decision was signed in 2025. Approval from DOI is required before the construction contract can be solicited for bids, but that approval has not yet occurred.

Wildlife surveillance provides early warning of pathogens that threaten United States agriculture, public health, and the recreational economy. Prevention and early detection at the wildlife-livestock-human interface are more cost-effective than outbreak response. The NWHC plays a critical role in detecting high-priority pathogens through continuous surveillance and monitoring of wildlife across the country. Replacement of critical infrastructure at the current facility continues to be deferred in anticipation of construction of a new facility. Construction costs for the new facility increase with each year the project is delayed because of inflation. Previous plans and business case analyses have shown that new construction at the current site remains the most cost-effective option.

The NWHC supports the mission of the United States Animal Health Association and its members and is a significant resource for wildlife, agriculture, and public health agencies in the United States and globally. By supporting wildlife disease outbreak investigations and providing tools to help manage disease in wildlife populations, the NWHC contributes to the understanding of important diseases, including highly pathogenic avian influenza, New World screwworm, and chronic wasting disease. With increasing concerns about emerging, reemerging, and transboundary diseases, demands on NWHC facilities and staff can be expected to increase.

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution
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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 23 APPROVED

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON**

SUBJECT MATTER: **Revise the Federal Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Livestock Testing Order to Remove the "30 cow" Provision and to Recognize On-Farm Bulk Tank Testing**

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to revise the livestock movement guidance issued on January 21, 2026[1] to eliminate the requirement to individually test 30 cows and instead require exporting dairies in states with "Provisionally Unaffected" or "Affected" status under the National Milk Testing Strategy to obtain two negative polymerase chain reaction test results from bulk tank milk samples representative of the entire milking herd, collected a minimum of seven days apart within 14 days before shipment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On April 24, 2024, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) issued the *Federal Order Requiring Testing for and Reporting of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Livestock*, effective April 29, 2024. This order established premovement testing requirements for lactating dairy cattle at a time when little was known about the effects of H5N1 influenza on dairy herds or the national prevalence of the disease.

Subsequently, USDA-APHIS issued another order, the *Federal Order Requiring Additional Testing for and Reporting of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Livestock and Milk*, effective December 6, 2024. This order established the National Milk Testing Strategy (NMTS), providing a roadmap for achieving H5N1 influenza-free status in the nation's dairy herds.

As of October 2026, 41 states have achieved Stage 4 "Unaffected" status through state-level surveillance programs developed in collaboration with USDA-APHIS. Updated guidance[1] issued by USDA-APHIS on January 21, 2026 provides for the interstate movement of lactating dairy cattle without HPAI testing if they originate from a state with "Unaffected" status. Options for the movement of lactating dairy cattle from states with "Affected" or "Provisionally Unaffected" status include either (1) active status in the Dairy Herd Status Program or (2) testing milk samples from no more than 30 cattle per shipment no more than seven days before interstate movement.

In May 2026, both Texas and Utah received lactating dairy cattle from Idaho that had met the 30-cow individual sampling requirement with negative test results. However, other cattle in those shipments were infected at the time of movement, subsequently resulting in H5N1 infection in the receiving dairy herds.

A USDA Technical Brief[2] states that there is a 70 percent probability of detecting HPAI using bulk tank milk samples in the week before the onset of clinical signs. The same brief states that "testing individual dairy animals to determine HPAI virus exposure of herds is time and cost inefficient, particularly in the early phases of infection, when few cows are infected." An ongoing study[3] by Dr. Chloe Stenkamp-Strahm and Dr. Jason Lombard involving six affected dairies in California found that, of the 220 healthy, sick, or fresh cows sampled, only 12.7 percent of individual milk samples were positive for HPAI, and all positive samples were from sick cows. In a previously published study,[4] clinical signs of HPAI were observed three to 14 days after initial detection in bulk tank milk samples. The low proportion of individual cow milk samples testing positive for HPAI supports "the notion that [bulk tank milk] testing is more sensitive than individual animal testing for virus early in an outbreak…." In accordance with the USDA Dairy Herd Status Program appendix, a bulk tank milk (BTM) sample should consist of representative sample(s) from the bulk tank(s), tanker(s), or silo(s) for each bulk tank emptying over a 24-hour period or a single collection cycle, whichever is longer.

On August 5, 2026, Dr. Alex Hamberg, on behalf of the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials, submitted a letter to Dr. Alan Huddleston requesting revisions to the USDA-APHIS movement guidance for lactating dairy cattle. The letter requested elimination of the requirement to individually test 30 cows and, instead, proposed requiring exporting dairies in states with "Provisionally Unaffected" or "Affected" NMTS status to obtain two negative PCR test results from bulk tank milk samples collected a minimum of seven days apart within 14 days before shipment.

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[1] APHIS Requirements and Recommendations for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 Virus in Livestock For State Animal Health Officials, Accredited Veterinarians and Producers May 14, 2024, updated January 21, 2026

[2] USDA APHIS Technical Brief: Estimating the Probability of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Detection in Bulk Tank Milk at Various Sampling Times Using Disease Event Surveillance Data. https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tech-brief-hpai-btm-surveillance.pdf

[3] Stenkamp-Strahm, et al. Individual-animal testing for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 during early outbreaks in six California dairy herds. *(In progress).*

[4] Stenkamp-Strahm, et al, Influenza A Virus detection in Bulk Tank and Pen Level Milk from Dairies Affected by Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1. https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.10.26.25338833.

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 24 APPROVED AS AMENDED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON

SUBJECT MATTER: Prioritization of Brucellosis Eradication

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to ensure that the eradication of brucellosis from the United States remains a priority and to commit resources to brucellosis research. Specifically, USAHA urges USDA to:

1. Prioritize the retention and recruitment of scientists with expertise in brucellosis management and research;
2. Ensure that brucellosis research is included in five-year research plans developed by the USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), National Animal Disease Center in Ames, Iowa. Such investment is critical to supporting ongoing and future national brucellosis eradication efforts;
3. Leverage the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and other departmental competitive funding sources to support brucellosis research and workforce development;
4. Preserve high-containment facilities for use in brucellosis research;
5. Explore opportunities for collaborative research projects involving USDA-ARS; USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS); states; universities; tribes; nonprofit organizations; and private organizations; and
6. Consider the use of existing quarantine facilities within the Greater Yellowstone Area for research purposes.

USAHA urges prioritizing adequate funding for scientific personnel, high-containment facilities, and equipment necessary to advance disease prevention and control. USAHA encourages USDA to work with USAHA to prioritize research that addresses these recommendations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

To protect public health and support our nation's livestock industry, billions of dollars have been invested in national brucellosis eradication programs over the past 90 years. This monumental effort has resulted in the eradication of the disease from domestic livestock herds and dramatic reductions in human infections. However, the presence of a wildlife reservoir of brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) requires ongoing

surveillance of livestock and wildlife, as well as regulatory responses to spillover events within the Designated Surveillance Areas (DSAs) of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. Surveillance is a cornerstone of the DSA states' brucellosis programs, helping to prevent the reestablishment of the disease in livestock and providing confidence to trading partners that the United States (US) domestic cattle and bison herds remain brucellosis-free. Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming continue to demonstrate that the level of surveillance is more than adequate to ensure that livestock originating from DSAs pose a negligible risk to trading partners. However, surveillance is labor-intensive and expensive to conduct.

State brucellosis programs have been used to mitigate the risk of disease reintroduction and spread for more than 20 years. During this time, a substantial body of data and knowledge regarding the management of brucellosis spillover events has accumulated, allowing brucellosis management practices to evolve and improve. However, field data and programmatic experience need to be supplemented by brucellosis research. In turn, such research requires sustained commitment and continued investment to:

- Develop new vaccine technologies and diagnostic tools;
- Evaluate current surveillance strategies and develop new approaches for livestock and wildlife to ensure that surveillance is sufficient to detect brucellosis when present;
- Better understand how responses to point-source introductions of brucellosis differ from historical brucellosis management, when US cattle and domestic bison herds were not yet brucellosis-free and within-herd and other cattle-to-cattle transmission was common; and
- Ensure that the most effective, yet minimally disruptive, methods are used in regulatory responses to brucellosis detections in livestock.

Producer fatigue is substantial after 20 years of program requirements. Tools that enable regulators to reduce the burden associated with both disease surveillance and responses to detections would benefit livestock producers, reduce future program costs, and improve program effectiveness.

Over the past 20 years, funding for brucellosis research in support of national eradication programs has decreased in both total and inflation-adjusted dollars, resulting in slower scientific advancement. Additionally, reductions in the size of the federal workforce have resulted in the loss of substantial institutional knowledge. Programmatic success in containing disease in the GYA, budgetary constraints, and competition for funding and resources associated with other disease threats have further diminished brucellosis as a national priority. With the removal of *Brucella* spp. from the Federal Select Agents and Toxins List, a renewed and enhanced commitment is needed to maintain the progress already achieved and allow a greater focus on eliminating brucellosis from wildlife in the GYA. Without such a commitment, the progress achieved at substantial personal and financial cost over nearly a century could be jeopardized.

2026 Resolution
130th Annual Meeting
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Madison, WI

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 25 APPROVED AS AMENDED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON

SUBJECT MATTER: Request For Timely Publishing of the Brucellosis Rule

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States to continue to solicit input for the proposed brucellosis rule from USAHA and the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO) prior to publication of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. Specifically, we request an opportunity for Greater Yellowstone Area state animal health officials, NASAHO, and others to provide input in calendar year 2027.

USAHA urges the Secretary to publish by the end of calendar year 2028 a proposed brucellosis rule and the development of supporting documentation that reflects the current body of knowledge around brucellosis management associated with a wildlife reservoir. USAHA also urges the inclusion of language to clarify official identification for brucellosis vaccination in the brucellosis rule.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

While the Brucellosis Eradication Program has successfully eradicated the disease from domestic cattle and bison herds in the United States (US), a wildlife reservoir of bovine brucellosis remains in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA). The presence of this wildlife reservoir requires ongoing livestock surveillance and regulatory responses to spillover events within the Designated Surveillance Areas (DSAs) of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. Surveillance is a cornerstone of the DSA states' brucellosis programs, helping to prevent the reestablishment of the disease in livestock and providing confidence to trading partners that US domestic cattle and bison herds remain brucellosis-free. Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming continue to demonstrate that the level of surveillance is more than adequate to ensure that livestock originating from DSAs pose a negligible risk to trading partners.

In 2009, the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, initiated efforts to establish a new direction for the Bovine Brucellosis Program to modernize the program and address brucellosis management in the context of wildlife reservoirs. These efforts included an initial concept paper, an interim brucellosis rule, a draft brucellosis and tuberculosis rule that was published in 2015 but

never finalized, and, ultimately, a draft rule specific to brucellosis. Despite more than 15 years since this process was initiated, a draft brucellosis rule has not successfully progressed through the rulemaking process.

During this time, a substantial body of data and knowledge regarding the management of brucellosis in areas with a wildlife reservoir has accumulated. Brucellosis spillover events are point-source introductions that are typically detected early. Within-herd and other cattle-to-cattle transmission are not regular features of current brucellosis epidemiology and management. State animal health officials from the GYA states are concerned that even the most recent draft brucellosis rule (2023) may require further review and revision to reflect current scientific knowledge, epidemiology, and disease management practices.

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 26 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMMITTEE ON SHEEP, GOATS AND CAMELIDS

SUBJECT MATTER: Sustained Support for the National Scrapie Eradication Program

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and Congress to provide sustained, dedicated funding and personnel for the National Scrapie Eradication Program, with an emphasis on the following priorities:

1. Maintain effective surveillance: Provide sufficient resources to sustain comprehensive, risk-based surveillance, including the collection of at least 30,000 samples annually, to detect remaining cases of classical scrapie and support future recognition of disease freedom.

2. Promote genetic resistance: Support producer access to genetic testing, education, and resources that encourage the selection and use of breeding animals with genotypes associated with resistance to classical scrapie.

3. Strengthen producer education and compliance: Invest in coordinated outreach and educational initiatives that reinforce the importance of official animal identification, movement records, participation in surveillance, and genetic selection as essential components of eradication.

USAHA further urges USDA-APHIS to maintain dedicated program resources and continue collaborating with state animal health officials, veterinarians, producers, and industry organizations to ensure that the progress achieved through decades of investment is not lost during the final stages of eradication.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

For more than 70 years, the United States has worked toward the eradication of classical scrapie in sheep and goats. Through the collaborative efforts of federal and state animal health officials, industry organizations, veterinarians, and producers, the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) has achieved substantial reductions in disease prevalence.

These accomplishments have relied on three essential components: surveillance, individual animal identification, and genetic selection for resistance.

Recent studies have confirmed that the scrapie agent can persist in the environment for an indeterminate period. Going forward, genetic selection for scrapie resistance in sheep and goats will be increasingly important for protecting against the reintroduction of scrapie through environmental exposure on previously infected premises.

In July 2026, classical scrapie was confirmed in a sheep slaughtered in Oregon, representing the first detection in more than five years. This case was identified through routine slaughter surveillance, demonstrating the continued importance and effectiveness of the program. However, the affected animal lacked official identification, complicating efforts to determine its flock of origin and highlighting the importance of producer compliance with identification and recordkeeping requirements.

Prior to this detection, the United States was approaching the seven-year benchmark necessary to support a self-declaration of freedom from classical scrapie in 2028. The recent detection may delay that milestone until approximately 2033, underscoring the challenges associated with the final stages of disease eradication.

In 2024, the United States Animal Health Association adopted Resolution 26, calling for sufficient funding and personnel to maintain scrapie surveillance and to collect at least 30,000 samples annually. Despite this recommendation, competing priorities and resource limitations have continued to challenge program implementation.

The recent detection reinforces the importance of sustained investment not only in surveillance but also in producer education and the adoption of genetic resistance. As disease prevalence declines, it becomes increasingly challenging to maintain producer awareness, participation in surveillance, and compliance with identification requirements. Continued education and outreach are essential to preserve the progress achieved and prevent further setbacks.

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2026 Resolution

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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 27 APPROVED

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON PARASITIC & VECTOR BORNE DISEASES**

SUBJECT MATTER: **New World Screwworm Eradication in the United States, Mexico, and Central America**

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) supports the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), New World screwworm (NWS) Directorate to request and Congress to appropriate sustained and additional funding to:

1. Fully fund the completion, operation, and long-term maintenance of the sterile fly production facility at Moore Air Base and evaluate, develop, construct, and operate additional sterile fly production capacity as needed to ensure the uninterrupted availability of sterile flies for eradication and emergency response efforts;

2. Fund the construction, operation, and maintenance of additional strategically located sterile fly dispersal facilities within the United States (US) to enhance domestic response capabilities and support future eradication operations in Mexico and Central America;

3. Provide sustained and supplemental appropriations to USDA-APHIS to support current and expanded sterile fly production capacity sufficient to meet domestic response needs while simultaneously supporting NWS eradication efforts in Mexico and Central America; and

4. Provide sustained and supplemental appropriations for domestic NWS surveillance, diagnostic capacity, emergency response operations, training and exercises, wildlife monitoring, research, technology development, and state-federal preparedness programs necessary to rapidly detect, contain, and eradicate infestations within the US.

The USAHA further urges USDA-APHIS, in coordination with international partners, to initiate and sustain comprehensive NWS eradication efforts in Mexico and Central America as soon as practicable once adequate sterile fly production capacity is available, with the goal of reestablishing a secure biological barrier south of the US.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

New World screwworm (NWS) (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*), a parasitic fly whose larvae feed on the living tissue of livestock, wildlife, companion animals, and humans, was successfully eradicated from the United States (US) in 1966 through a coordinated effort utilizing sterile insect technique (SIT), surveillance, animal movement controls, and federal-state-industry cooperation. Eradication efforts cost stakeholders tens of millions of dollars. Today, freedom from NWS provides approximately $1 billion annually in direct benefits to US livestock producers and approximately $3.7 billion annually in benefits to the broader US economy. These benefits include increased meat and milk production; reduced livestock mortality; lower veterinary, medication, and labor costs; improved wildlife health; and the avoidance of significant public health impacts associated with human myiasis. Since eradication, the continued protection of US animal agriculture has depended on maintaining a biological barrier in Central America through the work of the Panama-United States Commission for the Eradication and Prevention of Screwworm (COPEG).

On November 22, 2024, the Government of Mexico notified the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), of a confirmed detection of NWS in Chiapas, Mexico. Since that detection, USDA has committed substantial resources to international eradication and domestic preparedness, including $21 million for the expansion of sterile fly production capacity in Mexico, $8.5 million for the Moore Air Base sterile fly dispersal facility in Texas, approximately $610 million for the construction of a domestic sterile fly production facility at Moore Air Base, and approximately $105 million through the USDA-APHIS New World Screwworm Grand Challenge to support research, innovation, and preparedness initiatives. Collectively, these investments exceed $744 million and demonstrate the critical importance of sustained federal appropriations to respond to and prevent the reestablishment of New World screwworm in the US.

On June 3, 2026, USDA-APHIS confirmed the first US case of the current outbreak in a calf in Zavala County, Texas. Throughout the summer of 2026, additional detections were confirmed across multiple Texas counties and two counties in New Mexico, prompting the implementation of an extensive state and federal response that includes enhanced surveillance, epidemiologic investigations, animal movement restrictions, livestock inspections, and expanded SIT operations. The response continues to be coordinated among USDA-APHIS, the Texas Animal Health Commission, the New Mexico Livestock Board, and industry partners to contain the outbreak and prevent further spread.

The expanding NWS population in Mexico, the large geographic areas of infestation in the US, and the distance between those areas and the sterile fly dispersal facility at Moore Air Base demonstrate the need for additional domestic sterile fly dispersal facilities to support sterile fly dispersal throughout the southwestern US, the region at greatest risk of NWS infestation. Beyond eradication efforts in the US, these facilities will play an integral role in NWS eradication efforts in Mexico once adequate numbers of sterile flies are available.

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 28 APPROVED

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON PARASITIC & VECTOR BORNE DISEASES**

SUBJECT MATTER: **Strengthening Research, Education, and Extension Capacity to Address the Emerging *Theileria orientalis* Ikeda Threat in the United States Cattle Industry**

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association supports the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, and the USDA, Agricultural Research Service to request and Congress to appropriate annual funding to address the threat posed by the pathogenic protozoan *Theileria (T) orientalis* Ikeda and to:

1. Collaborate with state animal health officials, veterinary diagnostic laboratories, academic institutions, and industry stakeholders to prioritize surveillance and epidemiologic investigations for *T. orientalis* Ikeda and its vectors;

2. Support and facilitate research to better characterize the distribution, prevalence, economic impact, transmission dynamics, and risk factors associated with *T. orientalis* Ikeda infections in all United States cattle populations;

3. Support the research and development of improved diagnostic methods, treatment and prevention options, and strategies to mitigate the impacts of *T. orientalis* Ikeda, including integrated pest and vector management strategies and best practices;

4. Assemble and analyze field and research data to develop science-based recommendations for the effective control and management of *T. orientalis* Ikeda; and

5. Coordinate, participate in, and support symposia that bring together researchers and stakeholders to provide research updates and identify producer needs and priorities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Bovine theileriosis, caused by the pathogenic protozoan *Theileria orientalis* genotype Ikeda, poses a significant threat to animal health, cattle productivity, and the profitability of the United States (US) cattle industry. First diagnosed in the US in 2017, *T. orientalis* Ikeda has since spread westward alongside its primary tick vector, the Asian longhorned tick (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*), which has become established in 27 states and continues to expand its geographic range. Alternative routes of transmission, including other biting insects and needle transfer, may make the distribution and impact of bovine theileriosis significantly greater than previously thought.

The first detection of bovine theileriosis in the Midwest was reported in Missouri in 2023. Since then, cases have been reported in several other states, including Kansas (2024), Iowa (2024), and Nebraska (2025). Economic losses resulting from clinical theileriosis affect producers. In naïve areas, these losses occur primarily in adult cows. As *Theileria* becomes endemic in an area, the disease shifts toward clinical cases occurring primarily in a small percentage of young calves, most commonly those two to three months of age.

Acute infection with *T. orientalis* Ikeda causes anemia and fever, which can manifest clinically as weakness, late-term abortion, and death. However, most herds and most cattle that become infected never exhibit clinical signs. When mortality occurs in affected naïve herds, rates range from two to ten percent. In rare theileriosis outbreaks, mortality rates exceeding 20 percent have been observed. The specific risk factors that predispose particular herds or individual cattle to developing clinical signs of theileriosis are poorly understood. There is concern that, when subjected to stress, *Theileria*-positive animals, despite the absence of anemia, may have lower survival rates than *Theileria*-negative animals when challenged by a bovine respiratory disease event, underscoring the need for further research. Knowledge gaps regarding disease progression, pathology, and correlates of protection hinder the identification of high-risk animal groups and the implementation of evidence-based interventions, thereby limiting the development of effective control strategies. Currently, no proven effective vaccines or treatments are available, leaving veterinarians and producers with limited means to mitigate losses associated with *T. orientalis* Ikeda infection.