

animal agriculture

winter 2005

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

House, Senate Committees to control NAIS' \$33 million appropriation spending

The FY 2005 budget signed by President Bush on Dec. 8, 2004 gives \$33 million for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to use for National Animal Identification System (NAIS) implementation. However, language was included in the appropriations bill that may prevent that money from being used at APHIS' discretion. The language reads, "...The Committee provides \$33,197,000 for a national animal identification program... The Committee also includes statutory language that prohibits the Secretary from implementing an animal identification program prior to the notification of the Committees on

Appropriations and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry in the Senate and the Committee on Agriculture in the House of Representatives which shall include a detailed explanation of the components of such system." (from SR 108-340)

Ultimately this means that APHIS will have to go through Congress before being able to apply these funds—a process that most likely will not favor an aggressive timeline to continue moving forward with ID implementation. USDA anticipated that states would have the capability to register premises according to national standards by the summer of this year.

"We hope this inclusion does not interfere with APHIS' and industry's ability to move ahead with a National Animal ID System," said Glenn Slack, president and CEO of NIAA. "Continuing progress through establishment of premises identification and further development through pilot projects is imperative to the industry's ability to have a workable system."

The USDA transferred \$18.8 million for the development of NAIS from the Commodity Credit Corporation in 2004. The majority of that money has been allocated into cooperative agreements with states and tribes to begin testing identification systems across the country. ■

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ID/INFO EXPO 2005 slated for September in Chicago



The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) has announced that it will host ID/INFO EXPO 2005, September 27-29. The event will be held at the Crown Plaza Chicago O'Hare Hotel.

A conference and trade show devoted to the subject of animal identification and information systems, ID/INFO EXPO 2005 will focus largely on the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), a industry/state/federal collaborative effort, under development by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The one-of-a-kind trade show will showcase a variety of animal identification manufacturers and information systems service providers.

"With the success of the 2004 meeting, NIAA considered the need for an ID/INFO EXPO in 2005," said Dr. Robert Fourdraine, NIAA Animal Identification and Information Systems Committee chair. "Based upon overwhelming interest and support to host another meeting, we see it as a valuable forum to advance implementation of a national system."

Preliminary program and registration information will be published in April. Individuals wanting to be sure they are included on the mailing list are encouraged to go to www.animalagriculture.org, click on the ID/INFO EXPO logo and fill out an online information request form. ■

Cattlemen propose privatized ID system

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is proposing a national animal identification system that would enhance animal health surveillance and give cattlemen oversight for the system. The proposal counters the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Animal Identification System (NAIS), on the key premise that NCBA, not USDA, would maintain the database for tracking animals and premises.

"The proposal gives cattlemen one more tool to control their own destinies," said Allen Bright, a Nebraska cattle producer and chairman of the NCBA Animal ID Commission. "It would provide a reasonable timeline for creating a private system and go a long way toward resolving concerns about confidentiality."

NCBA announced the plan in early February at the Cattle Industry Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas. It must still be approved in the by members voting by mail ballots.

The proposal involves a multi-species ID service and data base that would allow USDA and state veterinarians disease surveillance access. Oversight would be provided by live-stock industry representatives,

according to NCBA.

The proposal's purpose reflects the same as the NAIS, however it is the oversight of the program that differs. NCBA says the plan would provide a number of avenues for producer participation, directly or through a service provider or data trustee. It would be designed to protect the privacy of producers and be flexible to accommodate differences in production methods.

Additionally, NCBA officials say they will seek financial incentives, including a tax credit, for participating industry segments, and eventual coordination with international ID systems to prevent disruption of trade. Other industry organizations say they will withhold comment on the NCBA plan until the details are made public.

NCBA has also announced an official tag for the proposed program, tapping Allflex U.S.A to produce the "Beef USA" Tag.

"We're pleased to partner with NCBA to help producers who want to take the important first steps towards adding value to their herd through the use of electronic identification," says Glenn Fischer, senior vice president of Allflex. ■

NIAA secures new ID committee leaders

Dr. Robert Fourdraine, chief operating officer for the Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium, has been appointed chairman of the NIAA Animal Identification and Information Systems Committee.

NIAA Chairman of the Board Dr. Rick Sibbel made the appointment following the departure of Dr. Mark Engle from the post. Engle, formerly with the National Pork Board, has taken a position with PIC USA and will remain a member of the committee. Fourdraine was serving as the committee's vice chair.

"We are fortunate to have someone with Robert's expertise and commitment to the issue to lead this committee," said Sibbel.

Appointed to work with Fourdraine are Dr. John Hunt, associate director of the Arizona Department of Agriculture, as first vice chair and Dr. Cris Young, field service veterinarian with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, as second vice chair. Sibbel said that the magnitude this issue presents currently with the pending implementation of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) justified the additional vice chair support.

Fourdraine also serves as a tri-chair of the NAIS Subcommittee of the Secretary's Advisory Committee for Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases. ■

USDA launches NAIS web site

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service announced the launch of a new Web site to inform stakeholders about the national animal identification system (NAIS). The Web site, www.usda.gov/nais, is designed to be a one-stop resource for facts about NAIS.

"We hope our stakeholders will visit the site frequently to find out the latest news about the NAIS from a national perspective," said APHIS Administrator W. Ron DeHaven. "It will be updated regularly as new information becomes available."

In addition to providing national news, the site provides contact information for state and tribal animal health authorities. The states and tribes are responsible for providing each premises under their purview with a nationally unique identification number, the starting point of the NAIS. All states should be able to assign nationally unique premises identification numbers to locations where animals are managed or held by mid-2005.

animal agriculture

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The BSE debate

2005 already has proven to be a high-profile year for BSE-related issues in the U.S. The end of December marked a big move towards opening beef trade with Canada. The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that after conducting an extensive risk review it is establishing conditions under which it will allow imports of live cattle under 30 months of age and certain other commodities from regions with effective bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) prevention and detection measures.

This final rule was set to ensure the continued protection of public and animal health from BSE, while removing prohibitions on the importation of certain animals and commodities from minimal-risk regions. Prior to being able to import to the United States, each country must undergo a thorough risk assessment. The rule would allow trade to begin on March 7 with Canada regarding cattle and beef products.

Since the announcement, an onslaught of action has taken place across the industry, from Congress to producer and packer organizations. Some support, some object, but it's clear that the issue may be further from being resolved than some may hope. The following is a look at some of the actions that have occurred regarding beef trade with Canada.

Dec. 29: USDA announces minimal risk rule for BSE-affected countries, a move that would open the Canadian border on March 7.

The National Cattleman's Beef Association (NCBA) offers support to USDA's rule, saying it "is another step in the process toward normalizing global trade for U.S. beef." NCBA notes that they are "insisting that an orderly process be in place to ensure the flow of Canadian cattle into the U.S. does not cause unnecessary dis-

ruption to the domestic cattle market."

Dec. 30: R-CALF speaks out against the rule, calling it a "wholesale abandonment of the United States' historically successful, science-based standard of disease prevention in favor of an unproven standard of disease management that has not been accepted by U.S. export customers."

The American Meat Institute files a lawsuit against USDA, saying there is not legal or scientific justification for continuing a ban on Canadian cattle 30 months of age and older. AMI indicates the litigation is not related to the rule published by USDA, rather it addresses the issue of a partial ban on older cattle, which dates back to May 2003.

APHIS Administrator Dr. Ron DeHaven announces that Canada has found another suspect case of BSE, with particular concern as the age of the animal was born following implementation of the feed ban in Canada. The animal was later confirmed positive, and investigations in both countries ensued.



DR. RON DEHAVEN

Jan. 2: USDA issues a fact sheet response to R-CALF, offering a point-by-point rebuttal of the organization's claims.

Jan. 4: USDA announces a total of 176,468 BSE tests for 2004, including 167,476 since the June 1 implementation of enhanced BSE surveillance, with no confirmed positive cases.

Jan. 10: R-CALF files lawsuit against USDA to overturn final rule.

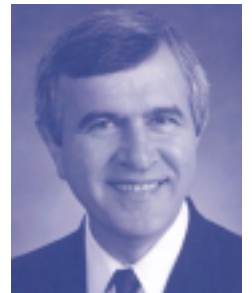
Jan. 11: Canada announces the finding of another BSE case, now the fourth Canadian-born cow to be diagnosed with the disease.

Jan. 18: R-CALF calls for unification among industry to prevent border from opening, by sending a letter to then NCBA president Jan Lyons. Lyons issued a statement declining the invitation, seeking to reach resolution without litigation.

Jan. 18: NCBA members arrive in Alberta, Canada to discuss the BSE issue. The goal would be to gather information to report back to NCBA's annual meeting.

Jan. 28: American Meat Institute files preliminary injunction against USDA in an attempt to end the remaining portions of the on-going ban on Canadian cattle.

Feb. 9: Secretary Mike Johanns announces that USDA will delay the effective date for allowing imports of meat from animals 30 months and over from Canada, citing a need for more investigations in the older cattle. Johanns would add that cattle and meat, less than 30 months, would remain on schedule for import.



SEC. MIKE JOHANNS

NCBA issues its support for the action, citing similar findings from their investigation that led to a member-supported directive from their annual meeting in early February.

AMI applauds the USDA move, saying that it supports that "it is safe to import both beef and cattle 30 months of age and older," again

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Plans set for 2005 NIAA Annual Meeting

Make plans to attend the 2005 Annual Meeting of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA), scheduled for April 3-7, 2005. The Radisson Riverfront Hotel in St. Paul, Minn. will serve as the venue for **"Animal Disease Monitoring, Surveillance & Security: Advancing a World-Class System,"** the theme of this year's meeting.

NIAA's Annual Meeting brings together producers, veterinarians, business executives, scientists, academicians, state and federal regulatory officials and other stakeholders in the animal food and fiber industry to discuss the latest issues in animal agriculture.

"We're looking forward to another world-class meeting for NIAA," said NIAA President and CEO Glenn Slack.

The opening general session will include a number of keynote



presentations by several pre-eminent agricultural leaders, including Dr. Bennie Osburn, Dean, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California-Davis.

NIAA committees will present 15 information-packed seminars addressing the breadth of issues affecting animal agriculture today. Other groups that will meet in conjunction with the NIAA Annual Meeting include the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials, National Johnes Working Group, and the National Animal Health Emergency Management Steering Committee.

A special feature at the 2005 meeting will be a one-day sympo-



symposium, "Protecting the Global Food Supply: Growing Concerns for Emerging Zoonotic Diseases."

The symposium, on April 7, will take an in-depth look at the interaction of public health, wildlife and animal diseases.

More information on the 2005 NIAA Annual Meeting, including registration, hotel and sponsorship information, can be found on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org, or by calling 270-782-9798. ■

Emergency Preparedness Symposium available for state agriculture leaders

The National Animal Health Emergency Management Steering Committee will be offering a special symposium for Commissioners, Secretaries and Directors of Agriculture, State Veterinarians and other industry officials who are interested in obtaining federal funding to enhance animal and food emergency preparedness and response capabilities at the state and local levels.

This symposium is designed to explain steps that are necessary for consideration for federal funding via state grants from the Office of Domestic Preparedness in the Department of Homeland Security. This funding can assist states to better protect their agriculture and food industry assets.

The Emergency Preparedness Symposium for State Agriculture Leaders will provide key information and explain the process to become eligible for funding to develop and integrate animal agriculture and food emergency preparedness and response capabilities with other state and local emergency systems.

The symposium will be held on Sunday, April 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. as part of the 2005 NIAA Annual Meeting in St. Paul, Minn. Attendees at the 2005 NIAA Annual Meeting will automatically be registered for the symposium at no additional charge. ■

PRV Eradication Celebration Scheduled

Mission Accomplished! As reported in the last issue of *animal agriculture*, all 50 states have achieved Stage V status, or "free," in the National Pseudorabies Eradication Program. NIAA invites annual meeting participants to share in a celebration of this industry-driven, highly successful state-federal-industry cooperative eradication campaign.

The event, to be held Monday, April 4 at 7 p.m., will include dinner and a look back by some of the program's principal leaders. The program is sponsored by the National Pork Board through the Pork Checkoff.

NIAA to host emerging zoonotic disease symposium

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) is hosting a focused symposium in conjunction with its 2005 Annual Meeting in St. Paul, Minn. Protecting the Global Food Supply: Growing Concerns for Emerging Zoonotic Diseases will be held on April 7 at the Radisson Riverfront Hotel.

The symposium will be a collaborative discussion including producers, veterinarians, government officials, food company representatives and academicians. The agenda involves a broad range of stakeholders, from animal and human health disciplines, which will gather to address the new epidemiological challenges of animal-human interactions.

"We're entering a new era for addressing zoonotic diseases," said NIAA Chairman of the Board Rick Sibbel, D.V.M. "NIAA has identified a need for all industry sectors to come together to discuss the many human-animal interactions and other factors that must be understood to avoid emerging zoonotic diseases and threats to our food supply in the future."

Avian influenza is an example of a zoonotic disease that may be emerging as a global threat. It is clear from this example that these challenges have worldwide implications on animal production, the food supply and human health. Veterinarians, animal health and public health officials can have a significant impact through epidemiological investigations. "Engaging with groups such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Homeland Security, USDA, APHIS, Wildlife Services and others can enhance our ability to mitigate the impact of zoonotic diseases," said Sibbel.

The program will feature several keynote speakers from the U.S.

and abroad to discuss growing concerns of zoonotic diseases on a global platform. Other highlights include lessons from past experience, strategies for enhancing global food system protection and a panel of individuals involved with Minnesota's collaborative efforts between industry, government and academia to protect the global food supply.

The symposium is co-spon-

sored by the National Center for Food Protection and Defense and the Center for Animal Health and Food Safety at the University of Minnesota. The agenda is scheduled from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., followed by a reception. For more information on the symposium, including speakers and registration, go to www.animalagriculture.org or call 270-782-9798. ■

New CAST Issue Paper Examines Worldwide Risks of Animal Diseases

The Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) has released a new issue paper, *Global Risks of Infectious Animal Diseases*.

The paper comprises a historical review of the most prevalent of these diseases, an outline of the diverse ways they enter a country, an evaluation of contemporary practices that exacerbate disease spread, and an overview of the significant impacts—now and in the future—that such diseases have on communities throughout the world.

The issue paper was written and evaluated by an international task force of 13 authors and 4 reviewers from France, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States.

"The recent devastating outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, Newcastle disease, and highly pathogenic avian influenza demonstrate the global risks of foreign animal and emerging diseases," said Jim Pearson, task force co-chair and international consultant. "These outbreaks have had severe economic, social, and political impacts."

"Animal diseases will continue

to affect food supplies, trade and commerce, and human health and well-being in every part of the world," said Mo Salman, task force co-chair, Colorado State University, Fort Collins. "Recent outbreaks of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (Mad Cow disease), West Nile virus, foot-and-mouth disease in swine, and avian influenza have made headlines and are of concern not only for significant economic costs but also for the potential to 'cross-over' to humans."

The full text of the paper, *Global Risks of Infectious Animal Diseases* (Issue Paper No. 28) may be accessed on the CAST web site at www.cast-science.org, along with other CAST publications, and is available in hardcopy for \$5.00 (includes shipping) by contacting the CAST office at 515-292-2125.

CAST is an international consortium of 36 scientific and professional societies. It assembles, interprets, and communicates credible science-based information regionally, nationally, and internationally on food, fiber, agricultural, natural resource, and related societal and environmental issues to its stakeholders—legislators, regulators, policymakers, the media, the private sector, and the public.

BSE debate

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

which has been AMI's primary concern.

R-CALF expressed "extreme disappointment" in the decision, noting that the entire rule is "fundamentally flawed."

Feb. 10: Senator Kent Conrad, a North Dakota Democrat and a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, was the lead sponsor (accompanied by nine others) of a resolution that would extinguish USDA's Minimal Risk Rule. Conrad says the U.S. Department of Agriculture failed to properly notify Congress of its intent to open the border March 7.

Feb. 11: Canada concludes investigation of the latest BSE case, citing the most likely cause of transmission to be from a contaminated feed produced shortly after the feed rule was implemented. The Agency notes that this can be attributed to the ban not being immediately and uniformly implemented across the industry after implementation.

Feb. 17: Office of Inspector General (OIG) releases a report on the investigation of USDA's handling of the Canadian beef/cattle ban. Report syndicates that questionable product, up to 20 tonnes (metric) may have been allowed into the U.S.

Feb. 22: USDA, APHIS releases guidelines for the implementation of minimal risk regions and importation of commodities from Canada, regarding BSE, in response to the OIG report.

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) releases a policy, encouraging USDA to continue the ban on beef from Canada older than 30 months. NASDA also encourages an audit of the Canadian feed industry, and for

USDA to await results from increased surveillance on Canada, among other items.

The Livestock Marketing Association calls for the border to remain closed to Canadian cattle and beef, until three objectives can be met, including: full implementation of mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL); resumption of U.S. cattle/beef trade with Japan, Mexico and South Korea; and that Canadian cattle imports be accepted only in an "orderly marketing method."

Feb. 24: USDA sends a technical team to Canada to evaluate BSE cases, participating in Canada's epidemiological investigations.

Feb. 25: The U.S. Department of Agriculture released its assessment of the Canadian ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban, stating "This assessment affirms our science-based decision to begin lifting the ban on live ruminants and ruminant products from Canada that have virtually no risk to human or animal health."

Mar. 2: A judge rules in favor of R-CALF, allowing an injunction on the original litigation filed by R-CALF against USDA. Hence, the Canadian border does not open on March 7 as originally scheduled.

Mar. 3: The Senate passes the Conrad legislation (announced Feb. 10) disapproving of the USDA's Minimal Risk Rule. It passes with a vote of 52-46, to be sent to the House of Representatives. President Bush indicated he would veto the legislation, offering his support to opening the Canadian border to cattle and beef trade.

Speculation exists across the industry as to how long the border will remain closed, however Secretary Johanns has indicated that USDA believes trade should be established in an expeditious manner. ■

Japan trade moving forward

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns released a statement in early February, stating that, "Japanese technical experts met today and accepted the U.S. grading system as an appropriate means to determine the age of cattle. This action now resolves the outstanding technical issues on resuming our trade in beef."

The agreement includes acceptance of USDA grade of A40, which would encompass cattle under the age of 20 months.

With resolution of the technical issues, political and legislative solutions will lead to a re-opening of trade with Japan for the U.S. beef industry. However, a certain timeline has not been established.

"[The] determination by the Japanese experts is an important step towards resolving this issue between our two countries. We now call upon our Japanese colleagues to expedite the remaining implementation process so that trade may resume."

Additionally, Representative Jerry Moran of Kansas has introduced a resolution that would add pressure to Japan in opening its border to U.S. beef.

"If the Japanese government continues down this path," said Moran, "I believe the United States should impose economic sanctions to protect our country from further economic hardship."

The resolution has gained support in the House of Representatives from some 50 congressmen, which calls on Japan to meet its trade obligations under an agreement reached on October 23, 2004. If Japan fails to abide by the agreement to reopen its border, then the U.S. Trade Representative should initiate immediate retaliatory economic measures on Japan.

Sheep industry convention brings enthusiasm

There was great enthusiasm for the future of the U.S. sheep industry at the 2005 American Sheep Industry Association (ASI)/National Lamb Feeders Association (NLFA) Annual Convention Jan. 26-29 in Reno, Nev. Registrations topped those seen in recent years, with attendance surpassing 360.

"The industry definitely demonstrated a unified front with participation from five national sheep associations including, ASI, NLFA, the American Lamb Board, the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center and the Western Range Association," stated ASI Executive Director Peter Orwick. "Additionally, all major players in the domestic wool industry had a strong presence again at this year's events, and everyone was pleased to hear U.S. production of lamb and wool would be increasing in 2005."



Among the highlights of the meeting include USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Administrator, Dr. W. Ron DeHaven, on the agency's commitment to the sheep industry by pledging long-term support to the scrapie eradication process and continued support for Veterinary Services and Wildlife Services programs. DeHaven provided an update on the intent of the agency to re-open the border between the United States and Canada. The results of the investigation by USDA's technical team in Canada will provide guidance on the next steps to be taken.

Major policy additions or amendments addressed by the board included:

- an opposition to the U.S. reopening the Canadian border to sheep trade until the trade barriers concerning bluetongue and anaplas-

mosis are eliminated;

- industry support of an effort to amend the Minor Use and Minor Species Animal Health Act of 2004 to include language that would provide federal tax incentives for the development and labeling of pharmaceuticals for sheep;
- ASI assistance to USDA/APHIS in requiring all states to attain consistent state status for scrapie eradication; and
- approval of an across-the-board membership dues increase for fiscal year 2006-2007.

The board of directors also welcomed back into membership sheep producers from Iowa and Delaware.

Elected to the leadership role as ASI president was Paul Frischknecht from Manti, Utah. Burdell Johnson from Tuttle, N.D., moves into the vice president position while Sonora, Texas, sheep producer, Glen Fisher, was elected secretary/treasurer. ■

WNV vaccination recommendations released by the AAEP

The Vaccinations Task Force of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) has released recommendations for the administration of the West Nile virus vaccine. Recommendations for the vaccine's use are based on the age, type and level of activity of the horse. The new West Nile virus guidelines are a supplement to the AAEP's "Guidelines for Vaccination of Horses" that was released in 2001. The guidelines are intended to serve as a reference for veterinarians as they employ vaccines in their respective practices.

To view the recommendations, please visit: www.aaep.org/pdfs/AAEP_WNV_Gu

idelines_2005.pdf. The Task Force, co-chaired by Robert Holland, DVM, and Gordon Brumbaugh, DVM, comprised researchers, vaccine manufacturers and private practitioners. A copy of the resource guide "Guidelines for Vaccination of Horses" can be obtained by contacting the AAEP office at 859-233-0147 or aaepoffice@aaep.org.

The Task Force stresses that each individual vaccination situation must be evaluated based on the risk of disease, potential for adverse reactions to a vaccine, anticipated efficacy of the selected product and cost. Veterinarians, through an appropriate veterinarian-client-patient relationship, should use the

guidelines coupled with available products to determine the best professional care for their patients.

The American Association of Equine Practitioners, headquartered in Lexington, Ky., is the world's largest professional association of equine veterinarians. Founded in 1954 as a non-profit organization dedicated to the health and welfare of the horse, the AAEP currently reaches more than 5 million horse owners through its over 8,000 members worldwide and is actively involved in ethics issues, practice management, research and continuing education in the equine veterinary profession and horse industry.

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Crawford nominated for FDA Commissioner

President George W. Bush announced on Feb. 14 his intention to nominate Lester M. Crawford, of Maryland, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs at the Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Crawford currently serves as Acting Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration. He previously served as Chair of the Department of Physiology-Pharmacology at the University of Georgia, Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service and Deputy Commissioner of FDA. He earned his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Auburn University and his PhD in pharmacology from the University of Georgia.

Crawford's appointment is pending approval from the Senate.

Chambliss to head Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry

U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., has been selected by his colleagues to serve as the Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.

"I am very humbled to have been selected to serve as Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. It is a prestigious honor and I look forward to working with my colleagues on the many important issues our committee will address," said Chambliss.

As Chairman, Chambliss will lead the key panel with broad jurisdiction affecting our national agriculture policy, such as, agriculture economics and research; agriculture extension services; agriculture production and commodities; animal industry and disease; crop insurance; soil and water conservation; farm credit and security; forestry issues; inspection of live-

stock, meat and agriculture products, and pests; pesticides; rural development and electrification; and many others.

House Ag Committee roster updated

Chairman Bob Goodlatte welcomed six new majority and five new minority members to the House Agriculture Committee. New majority members include Charles W. Boustany, Jr., LA, John J.H. "Joe" Schwarz, MI, John R. "Randy" Kuhl, Jr., N.Y., Virginia Foxx, N.C., K. Michael Conaway, Texas, and Jeff Fortenberry, Neb. New minority members include Henry Cuellar, Texas, Charlie Melancon, La., Jim Costa, Calif., John T. Salazar, Colo., and John Barrow, Ga.

Leadership of the committee is as follows: Bob Goodlatte, Va., Chairman; John A. Boehner, Ohio, Vice Chairman; and Collin C. Peterson, Minn., Ranking Minority Member.

AVMA establishes animal welfare division

The AVMA will establish a division dedicated to animal welfare that will monitor the science of animal welfare and assist the Association in proactively addressing developing issues of animal well-being.

The Executive Board also designated animal welfare as one of the AVMA's top five strategic issues for the next one to three years. Economic viability, veterinary manpower, veterinary education, and veterinary services were also designated as strategic priorities. Next, the board will develop goals for each issue.

Establishing an Animal Welfare Division was a centerpiece of Dr. Bonnie V. Beaver's agenda as incoming AVMA president and one

of several welfare-related proposals she submitted to the board in November.

The Executive Board approved Dr. Beaver's plan allocating up to \$346,000 for creating five staff positions in the division, at least two of which will be filled by veterinarians with a broad range of veterinary-related animal welfare expertise. In addition to a division director, there will be an administrative assistant, public relations position, research analyst, and research writer.

Adapted from the American Veterinary Medical Association, R. Scott Nolen.

AASV announces swine welfare position

The American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV) Board of Directors recently approved a position statement on the welfare of swine. The AASV Pig Welfare Committee prepared the statement in response to the ongoing discussion and review of gestation stalls being led by the AVMA.

Committee chairman Dr. John Deen said, "It is always difficult to define swine welfare, yet it is always evident that swine farmers and their veterinarians are involved in swine welfare improvement each day." He added, "This statement is an attempt to recognize the skills and responsibilities that are evident in these communities and explain how one issue, namely gestation stalls, cannot overwhelm the other important issues in swine welfare that need to be addressed."

The position statement asserts that most pig stockpersons deliver consistent and diligent care for their pigs, and suggests that compromised care is most often the result of a lack of understanding or inattention rather than malicious intent or inadequate resources. It points out that swine veterinarians are not

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defenders of the status quo as some have stated, but seek to continually improve swine welfare through herd health programs, SWAP[SM] assessments, research, and education. The statement also contains a pledge to continue to study and develop alternate housing methods while decrying any attempt to make simple prohibitions without the availability of valid and sustainable alternatives.

Landmark air emissions agreement completed

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), working with representatives of the egg production, dairy, and poultry industries, has finalized a major consent agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A key part of this agreement is a two-year benchmark study of the air emissions from livestock and poultry operations across the country. Based on the findings of the study, EPA will set national air policies, identify farm emissions thresholds, and then regulate excessive levels. "National restrictions on air emissions will lower air emissions from livestock and poultry farms across the country," said NPPC President Keith Berry, a pork producer from Greencastle, Ind.

Leading university scientists will conduct the EPA-approved study, using the most modern equipment and approved methods. Purdue University will manage the study, oversee quality assurance, financial accounting, and provide status reports to EPA, industry and the general public. The study will gather data relative to the thresholds of the Clean Air Act (CAA), the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act

(EPCRA). NPPC intends to host a series of six sign-up meetings for producers across the country in the coming weeks.

French study evaluates BSE transmission in primates

The Lancet, an international general medical journal, has published a research letter that addresses oral infection of BSE, using primates as the subjects. The French research team found results indicating that BSE prevention measures are effective in minimizing risks of human infection. The title of the study is Risk of oral infection with bovine spongiform encephalopathy agent in primates.

The Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique scientists estimate that a person would have to eat at least 1.5kg of neural (brain and spinal) tissue to be at risk of developing variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD), according to a BBC report.

Researchers administered a 5g oral dose of brain homogenate from a BSE-infected cow to two macaques. One macaque developed vCJD-like neurological disease 60 months after exposure, whereas the other remained free of disease at 76 months. Using this study, along with previous studies on vCJD in primates, researchers have made a preliminary estimate of the food exposure risk for man, which provides additional assurance that existing public health measures can prevent transmission of BSE to man, according to the study's abstract.

Take Care™ program launched

The Pork Checkoff's Take Care – Use Antibiotics Responsibly™ program is now available to all pork producers. The program was developed to guide producers and veterinarians on the responsible use of antibiotics to preserve animal

health and protect public health.

The Take Care program consists of Responsible Use principles and guidelines intended to guide producers and veterinarians through an assessment of the need for antibiotics and their appropriate use and disposal. The program also incorporates the practices detailed in the Checkoff's Pork Quality Assurance™ program for the development of a herd health plan, a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship and more.

"We recognized the concerns associated with the use of antibiotics in pork production, analyzed the way they are used in this industry, consulted with producers and subject matter experts and developed a reference manual on antibiotic use for producers and veterinarians," said Dave Culbertson, a pork producer from Geneseo, Illinois and president of the National Pork Board. "The program is practical, yet it is based on sound science and the experience of many industry and non-industry professionals."

The Take Care program is an example of industry-wide cooperation. Developed by pork producers on the Pork Checkoff's Pork Safety Committee and the Pharmaceutical Issues Task Force, it also received input from the pharmaceutical and feed industries, the American Association of Swine Veterinarians, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Pork Producers Council. ■

Not a member, but planning on attending Annual Meeting? Email Michele Vise-Brown at mvisebrown@animalagriculture.org to find out about new member incentives!

Members in the news

Dr. Lonnie King to work for CDC

Dr. Lonnie King, dean of the **Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine**, will spend the next year on loan to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta serving as director of the agency's new Office of Strategy and Innovation (OSI).

King has been consulting with the CDC's National Center for Infectious Diseases for the past year on strategic planning and workforce planning, as well as helping them build capacity in veterinary medicine and animal health. He began his new post in early February.

"There's a lot at stake," King said. "The CDC has a \$7 billion budget and 12,000 employees, and it is charged with a vitally important mission – ensuring public health in this country. It's important that we be sure it's achieving what it is charged to do."

"Dr. King's unique skills in organization dynamics, change management and strategic planning, combined with his background as an outstanding scientist will make him an invaluable addition to CDC," said Julie Gerberding, CDC director.

"I strongly believe in public service and the importance of spending parts of our careers contributing to the efforts of government," King said. "I'm grateful to both MSU for allowing me to take this assignment and to CDC for giving me this opportunity."

MSU President Lou Anna Kimsey Simon supports King's involvement with CDC.

"Michigan State has a long-standing and deep-seated belief in sharing our expertise, a responsive-



DR. LONNIE KING

ness to national needs and a commitment to public service," she said.

"Lonnie King's internationally renowned career has embodied those values. Once again, his talent and wisdom in service to national public health challenges have been sought. It is an honor for both Dr. King and MSU."

King's position will be in the CDC director's office. The OSI will have five functional teams focusing on goals management, health equity, strategy and policy, innovation and evaluation.

King also will be working on a legislative agenda for CDC that will help educate members of Congress about CDC programs and issues and develop support, financial and legislative, that enables CDC to increase its health impact.

King expects to be back on campus every few weeks and will continue to be connected to major college issues, such as development, accreditation and important student events like commencement.

Riddell to head AABP

The **American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP)** has announced that M. Gatz Riddell, Jr., D.V.M., of Auburn University, Ala., will become Executive Vice President of the AABP. Riddell is preceded by Jim Jarrett, D.V.M., who passed away in January after a long battle with colon cancer.

Prior to this position, Riddell served as assistant professor, associate professor and professor in the Department of Large Animal Surgery and Medicine, Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine, since 1984. A native of McPherson, Kan., Riddell received his veterinary degree from Kansas State University in 1977, then spent the next four years as an intern and theriogenology resident at Auburn University. Riddell then

entered private practice in two clinics in Tennessee before joining Auburn in 1984 as an assistant professor. He achieved Diplomate status in the American College of Theriogenology in 1982.

"For the AABP, this transition from Dr. Jim Jarrett's leadership is not under the circumstances anyone would want, but it will give me an opportunity to serve the organization which has helped me become involved with many food animal issues and other organizations," said Riddell, who served as AABP president in 1996. "The level of volunteerism and good will within the organization that I saw as a board member and officer was and is impressive."

"Dr. Riddell combines private and academic practice experience with an outstanding track record of volunteer service to AABP that we feel qualifies him to represent and lead AABP," said Cary Christensen, D.V.M., chairman of the AABP search committee. Riddell took over the position of executive vice president on Mar. 1.

Pork Board hires new director

The **National Pork Board's** Science and Technology Department has hired Dr. Robyn Fleck as the director of swine health programs. Fleck has experience as a practicing veterinarian and her most recent position was with Schering-Plough. She has a long history with the Pork Checkoff as a member of the Swine Health Committee. Fleck began on Feb. 14, with her primary duties involving animal identification and swine disease surveillance programs.

From NIAA...

NIAA has named Peggy Logsdon as Director of Operations. Peggy has served with NIAA for four years, previously as principal assistant. ■

NIAA welcomes the following new members!!

National Associations & Commercial Organizations:

**Monsanto Company
Dr. Chris Ashworth
3400 Glen Flora Way
Fort Smith, AR 72908**

Individual Members (Self-employed):

**Dr. Jack L. Anderson
P.O. Box 190
Columbus, NE 68602**

Affiliate Membership (Non-voting):

**Optimal Ag Consulting, Inc.
Dr. Jay Parsons
4406 Silverstone Court
Fort Collins, CO 80525**

For information about membership in NIAA, contact Michele Vise-Brown at (270) 782-9798, Ext. 105 or mvisebrown@animalagriculture.org.

**Pfizer Animal Health
Dr. William McBeth
P.O. Box 443
Morgantown, PA 19543**

Renewing members!

(during the past quarter)

National Associations & Commercial Organizations:

American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Association of Equine Practitioners
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Horse Council
American Veterinary Medical Association
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Elanco Animal Health
eMerge Interactive
Farms.com/PigCHAMP, Inc
Farnam Companies, Inc.
Hawkeye Steel Products, Inc.
IDEXX Laboratories, Inc.
Iowa Select Farms
Livestock Marketing Association
Micro Beef Technologies Ltd.
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Renderers Association
PIC, USA
Premier Sheep Supplies, Ltd.
Propig.com
Schering-Plough Animal Health Corp.
Viral Antigens, Inc.

State-level Associations & Publicly Supported Institutions/Agencies:

California Department of Food and Agriculture
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory System
Cornell University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Idaho State Department of Agriculture
Illinois Beef Association
Illinois Farm Bureau
Indiana Farm Bureau
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
Iowa Pork Producers Association
Kansas Animal Health Department
Maine Department of Agriculture
Michigan Pork Producers Association
Mississippi Board of Animal Health
New York Department of Agriculture and Markets
North Carolina Pork Council
North Carolina State University
Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
Texas Animal Health Commission
Texas Farm Bureau
Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
Washington State Department of Agriculture
West Virginia Department of Agriculture
Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium
Wyoming Livestock Board

Individual Members (Self-employed)

Dr. Julie Ann Jarvinen
Dr. Don Sanders

Affiliate Membership (Non-voting)

Diachemix, LLC
Feedlot Health Management Services
GrowSafe Systems, Ltd
National Meat Association

Avian influenza: On the brink of pandemic status

Avian flu, which has killed millions of birds and several dozen people in Asia, poses a "very ominous" threat to humans worldwide, the top doctor at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control warned.

In an address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., Dr. Julie Louise Gerberding noted that the in its current form, avian influenza poses a relatively limited problem for humans. But, she said, the current situation "probably" resembles the period before the 1918 Spanish flu outbreak when the virus was quietly mutating into a strain that would eventually leave 50 million people dead.

"Most people who are looking at this recognize it is a very ominous situation for the globe in terms of statistical probability" of a larger outbreak among humans, Gerberding said.



DR. JULIE LOUISE GERBERDING

Gerberding's comments came just a day after Dr. Nancy Cox, the CDC's chief influenza scientist, suggested to a AAAS audience that further mutation in the avian flu in Asia could precipitate the worst pandemic in human history.

Additionally, the The United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) has placed emphasis on the disease. The FAO held a regional meeting on avian influenza on Feb. 23 to Feb. 25 in Ho Chi Minh City, noting the need to control the AI virus in the "greatest extent possible" to reduce risk in poultry as well as prevention of a global pandemic.

"It is in the interest of both developed and developing countries to invest in the control and containment of avian influenza. Our objective is to protect human health—locally and internationally—and to promote food security—and our strategy is to control the disease at its source," said Samuel Jutzi, Director of FAO's Animal Production and Health Division.

Researchers believe that prolonged contact with infected birds or consumption of raw, infected chicken meat is required for the virus to jump to humans. But once it does make the jump, it appears to be lethal. According to a report in the Financial Times, the current outbreak has infected 55 humans in Asia and killed 42, a mortality rate of 76 percent. Close to 140 million birds have died or been destroyed in the Asian epidemic to date, and loss of their flocks has left many farmers in deep debt. Total poultry farm losses in Asia in 2004 are estimated at more than \$10 billion according to Oxford Economic Forecasting.

The largest concern stems from the virus mutating in such a way that

it becomes easier to pass from human to human, without losing any of its lethal force. An Oxford research team recently reported that the virus is adapting to attack mammals.

Today's H5 strain, Gerberding said, "has already evolved from the H5 of a few years ago."

"The concern in Asia," she explained, "is that we have this highly pathogenic strain of influenza, circulating widely, and there are really wonderful opportunities for this virus to either reassort (its genes) with human strains of influenza, or with other avian species, and evolve into a strain that has whatever that secret ingredient is that allows it to be effectively transmitted from person to person."

Because virus can mutate and spread so quickly, there is a premium on finding viruses that emerge even in remote parts of the world, keeping them under surveillance, and being prepared to intervene if they jump to humans.

"We have to be incredibly fast in communication and we have to have, most importantly, fast action," she said.

Gerberding said some of the response plan is modeled on disrupting "small world networks" by limiting the movements of people who might be carrying the virus, for example, or possibly even order quarantines. The effort requires increasingly refined communications efforts, she said, so that people are informed and persuaded to alter their behavior without causing unnecessary disruptions or panic.

International cooperation also is crucial, and she cited the efforts of Thailand and Vietnam as helpful in the current campaign.

"A problem in a remote corner of the world becomes a world problem overnight," she said. "A world problem quickly becomes a local problem, in every corner of the world." ■

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