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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

Preparing for the worst

North Carolina leads the way in FMD preparedness

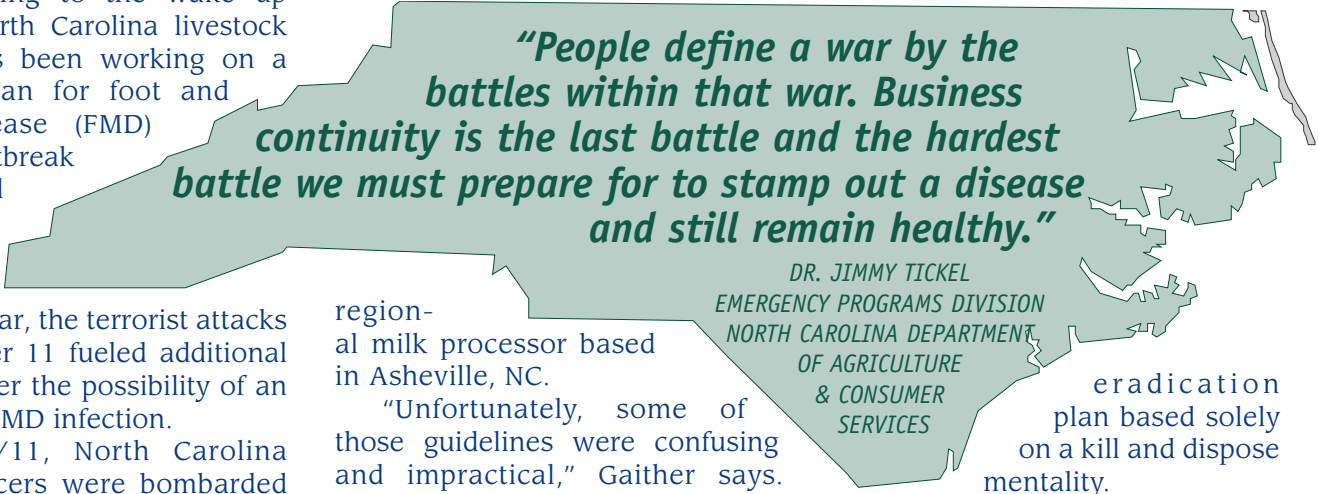
**Business Continuity &
Disaster Recovery Planning**

First in a 3-part Series

Responding to the wake up call, the North Carolina livestock industry has been working on a response plan for foot and mouth disease (FMD) since the outbreak in the United Kingdom in 2001.

Later that year, the terrorist attacks of September 11 fueled additional concerns over the possibility of an intentional FMD infection.

After 9/11, North Carolina dairy producers were bombarded with guidelines from federal agencies and trade associations about what to do in case of an agroterrorism event, according to Buddy Gaither, president of Milkco, a



“People define a war by the battles within that war. Business continuity is the last battle and the hardest battle we must prepare for to stamp out a disease and still remain healthy.”

regional milk processor based in Asheville, NC.

“Unfortunately, some of those guidelines were confusing and impractical,” Gaither says. “Individually, producers would seldom be able to devote all the resources necessary to implement all of the government recommendations. Moreover, the USDA was not addressing regional cooperation despite the fact that FMD and other foreign animal diseases (FAD) will have no respect for state lines.”

Mindful of geographic limitations of a state response plan, and horrified by the potential nightmares of transportation lockdowns and animal depopulation responses, North Carolina dairy industry leaders changed focus right in the middle of a late 2002 FMD table top exercise and started brainstorming about how to garner USDA support for regional response teams. At that time the existing Tarheel response plan suggested minimum lockdowns of two weeks compounded by an

eradication plan based solely on a kill and dispose mentality.

Business continuity is key

Since then, to compliment their regional strategy emphasis, Tarheel State stakeholders have focused on the all-important component of emergency preparedness known as business continuity.

Dr. Jimmy Tickel, a veterinary specialist with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDACS) Division of Emergency Programs, equates bioterrorism with warfare. “People define a war by the battles within that war,” he says. “Business continuity is the last battle and the hardest battle we must prepare for to stamp out a disease and still remain healthy. The pinnacle of bioterrorism response is eradicating a disease without eradicating

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USDA proposes metadata repository

The Agriculture Department is considering a new approach for a national animal identification system that would allow the department to link to a network of private and state-operated animal tracking databases.

Speaking at an American Farm Bureau Federation annual meeting conference, USDA chief veterinarian Dr. John Clifford said the system would allow USDA to tap into a portal of various animal identification and tracking systems run by commodity groups or other organizations, as well as into 20 existing state databases.

The new approach retains the critical components of a national database already established by USDA: premises registration, animal identification (individual or by groups/lots) and animal tracking.

"The concept will allow us to enter into agreements with the different entities responsible for the different databases," Clifford explained.

The agreement will define the legal responsibility of all parties involved regarding the system's specifications, which USDA has determined will be reliability, uninterrupted access for state health officials and no user fees for states or federal entities accessing the system.

"It will also define the necessary

safeguards to preserve the data if the organization or company ceases to maintain that database," Clifford said.

Clifford emphasized that the agency is now only considering the feasibility of this approach, but said Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns strongly supports the idea.

In a letter to stakeholders following the Farm Bureau meeting, Clifford said ". . . we are now proposing a metadata repository that USDA would develop and maintain; this potentially will allow us to work with multiple databases collecting information on animal movement. In very basic terms, metadata is an information technology solution that stores data about data."

Also referred to as a "single portal" option, Clifford said it could very well provide an effective means for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to send queries for animal movement records only to those databases and have information on a subject animal or animals, enhancing the efficiency of any potential animal disease investigation.

"We will thoroughly evaluate the metadata technology solution prior to any actual development," he said.



USAHA officials meet with Johanns

In January, Dr. Bret Marsh, Indiana State Board of Animal Health and Dr. Bob Hillman, Texas Animal Health Commission, met with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns and offered to host a jointly facilitated session on the National Animal Identification System.

Marsh is president of the U.S. Animal Health Assn. (USAHA) and Hillman chairs USAHA's Committee on Livestock Identification.

Marsh said the objective of such a meeting would be to assemble a small group of key industry representatives to move plans for a national animal identification system forward. The USAHA proposal is currently under consideration by USDA.

NIAA Animal ID Committee to meet April 5

The Animal Identification and Information Systems Committee of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture will hold a session on Wednesday afternoon, April 5, in conjunction with the 2006 NIAA Annual Meeting in Louisville, Ky.

According to committee chairman Dr. Robert Fourdraine, USDA officials are scheduled to discuss integration of private and state animal tracking databases, implementation of the AIN, and report on the initial NAIS pilot projects. Brian Down with Sun Microsystems will discuss aspects to consider in implementing a distributed database system. Rick Thaemert with Fleishman Hillard International Communications will speak on Building an Effective Education and Outreach Program.

A complete committee agenda, as well as program and registration information for the annual meeting, is available on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org.

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USDA announces implementation of animal identification numbers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced plans to begin allocating animal identification numbers (AINs) to tag manufacturers and approving visual identification tags for use under the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), paving the way for distribution of these tags to producers.

The initial implementation of AINs focuses on cattle. The use of AINs with other types of identification devices (e.g., implants) used in other species will be considered as the NAIS species working groups finalize their recommendations for utilizing the AIN.

USDA also is providing an option to use supplemental identification methods or technologies (e.g., radio-frequency and biometrics) that enhance the utility of AIN tags. Supplemental identification methods or technologies are optional and may vary among species. To ensure compatibility and uniformity



is achieved in the national program, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will establish technology standards, when applicable, along with performance requirements for these technologies.

USDA invites companies who wish to manufacture AIN tags to apply for USDA approval. Guidelines for the manufacture and distribution of AIN tags under NAIS can be found on the NAIS Web site at www.usda.gov/nais. Information regarding the distribution of AIN tags to producers is also provided on the Web site.

Notice of this action was published in the March 3 *Federal Register*. ■

Cattlemen form USAIO; team up with ViaTrace, Microsoft

A group of cattlemen, with assistance from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), has formed an "independent consortium" that will manage an animal tracking database.

The U.S. Animal Identification Organization (USAIO) is a non-profit entity whose stated goal is to involve multiple species producer groups in managing its day-to-day operation. The USAIO board includes representatives from beef cattle and bison associations as well as regional identification networks, and will grow as other livestock producers and species groups get involved.

Charles Miller, a beef producer

from Nicholasville, Ky., was chosen as the board's chairman. Other members of the board identified thus far are Rick Stott of Idaho, Dr. Bob Smith of Oklahoma and bison producer Lance Kuck of Nebraska.

NCBA president Jim McAdams said he is gratified by the formation of USAIO. "I am pleased to see oversight of the animal movement database resting in such capable and experienced hands. But, I am also proud that NCBA has fulfilled the directive we were issued by our members – to bring this database to fruition, then allow an independent consortium to assume management responsibility for it," he said.

USAIO plans to work with live-

KFB unveils traceability program

The Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) has announced Beef Verification Solution, a program that will offer customized information management solutions that enable beef producers to collect individual animal information, connect to other segments of the livestock industry, comply with regulatory identification programs and improved their livestock operations.

"Our goal is to connect farmers and ranchers with the transition to a national animal identification system," said Mark Nelson, an economist with KFB's Agriculture Solutions division. He said Beef Verification Solution will allow producers to fulfill consumer meat traceability expectations and get a head start on animal identification compliance.

As the USDA's National Animal Identification System (NAIS) evolves, Nelson said Beef Verification Solution would be flexible enough to adapt.

More information is available on the Internet at www.agsolusa.com/bvs/.

stock associations, data service providers and animal health authorities to encourage producer participation in the consortium that will record movements of livestock from point of origin to processing.

The database was developed by ViaTrace, a developer of traceability software for government and industry, and has begun its initial phase of accepting data. It will operate on a Microsoft platform.

The second phase of bringing the system online, which is expected to begin in the third quarter of 2006, will allow individual producers to input data about their herds directly.

The USAIO website is www.usaio.net. ■

Leading the way back to the road less traveled

Dr. Rick Sibbel is a driving force in revitalizing food animal medicine

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Robert Frost

Veterinary medicine is at a fork in the road, says Dr. Rick Sibbel. "Over the last 30 years, we've gone from food animals being the focus of the profession to companion animals now dominating the spotlight," he observes.

The outgoing NIAA Chair-man of the Board calls it like he sees it. And, clearly, he has no shortage of opportunities to see what's happening all around the world. An 18-year member of the Schering Plough Animal Health team, Sibbel currently serves as the pharmaceutical firm's director of global technical services for ruminant species. In that demanding role, he

Dr. Rick Sibbel, seen here on the new-age Segway at the 2005 AVMA Convention, is a tireless crusader for food animals and the future of food supply veterinary medicine.

But he's not ashamed to admit that his life is greatly enriched by a German Shorthair Pointer named Rusty and a feline friend named Speck.

travels to more than 20 countries on a regular basis.

"I'm a lucky veterinarian," Sibbel relates. "I have opportunities to bring food animal medicine to Western nations and Third World cultures. But, sadly, I'm observing that society has grown complacent about the high quality of its food supply."

Fortunately, the irrepressible Sibbel not only sees light at the end of the tunnel, he's shining a brilliant beacon down there to illuminate the way for others. As acting chair of a group of devoted stakeholders known as the Food Supply Veterinary Medical Coalition, he's been part of a collaborative driving force behind a landmark study to estimate the demand for veterinarians in food supply related disciplines in the United States and Canada.

"The Coalition's mission is to maintain an abundant, safe and wholesome food supply by ensuring that veterinarians are appropriately involved throughout the entire food chain," Sibbel explains.

To that end, Sibbel and his Coalition colleagues campaigned tirelessly to raise funds to pursue their goals.

"If we're going to have enough qualified veterinarians to serve the food chain in the years ahead, it's up to us to lead the way now," Sibbel relates. "For me, personally, it's a passion to let the veterinary community know we have to swing the pendulum back to the center to achieve a balance

PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. ROSEMARY J. LOGIUDICE, AVMA

"If we're going to have enough qualified veterinarians to serve the food chain in the years ahead, it's up to us to lead the way now."

DR. RICK SIBBEL
NIAA CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

between companion animal and food animal medicine."

Collectively, the Coalition collaborators inspired contributions to the tune of a whopping \$340,000, which financed the progressive Delphi Model Analysis conducted by Dr. David Andrus, Dr. Kevin Gwinner and Dr. Bruce Prince, who are researchers in the College of Business at Kansas State University.

"It's the same strategic planning discipline the U.S. Department of Defense uses," Sibbel mentions. "We were impressed by the inclusion of veterinary professionals representing many key disciplines related to multinational food production and the focus on their future needs."

Encompassing a myriad of critical issues, the multi-part survey addressed economic, demographic, technological, and societal factors influencing the future demand for food supply veterinarians; variables affecting the supply of different food supply veterinary careers; veterinary student career concerns

and decisions; and influences on veterinary career changes.

The two-year study was completed in March this year, and while results won't be made public until they are published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* later this spring, Sibbel doesn't hesitate to share his positive feelings about the study's outcome and the future of his profession.

The Coalition's mission is to maintain an abundant, safe and wholesome food supply by ensuring that veterinarians are appropriately involved throughout the entire food chain.

"Because of societal needs, there's so much movement in food supply medicine back to the main stream," he says. "I'm very confident that veterinary school leaders will recognize that momentum and promote curriculum changes to assist in training an adequate supply of food animal veterinarians for the years ahead."

Despite possible roadblocks on the highway en route to that goal, Sibbel is extremely optimistic about the journey. "There's never been a brighter time in food supply veterinary medicine," Sibbel emphasizes. ■

*By Linda L. Leake
Contributing Writer*

Scott Stuart to take NIAA reins

NIAA Vice Chairman of the Board R. Scott Stuart will be installed as Board Chairman for a two-year term during the NIAA annual



R. Scott Stuart

membership meeting on April 3 in Louisville, Ky. The following is a brief look at Stuart, only the fifth individual to hold this position since NIAA began operations in 2000.

Full Name: Robert Scott Stuart

Age: 46

Background: Scott was raised on his family's commercial cow/calf ranch in the North-Central Colorado Mountains and he has been involved in the livestock industry continuously since that time.

Education: B.S. in Agricultural Business and Economics, Colorado State University

Employment: Serves as President/CEO of the National Livestock Producers Association in Colorado Springs, Colo. Previously served as General Manager of the National Producers Service Company, a member firm of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

Years Involved with NIAA/LCI: Since 1992

NIAA/LCI Service: LCI Board of Directors, 1993-99; Chair, Livestock Care Committee, 1997-99; Member, LCI Vision 2000! Task Force, 1997-99; NIAA Board of Directors, 2000-present; NIAA Treasurer 2002-04, Elected Vice Chairman of the Board (Chairman-elect) in 2004.

Family: Wife, Katie; 2 sons, Sam, age 18 and J.P., age 16.

Food Supply Veterinary Medicine Coalition

Bayer Animal Health
Academy of Veterinary Consultants
American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Food Hygiene Veterinarians
American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American Veterinary Medical Association
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service

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USDA receives funding for A.I. prevention, preparedness

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns has commended President Bush for signing and Congress for approving \$91.4 million in funding to enhance USDA's efforts to prevent and prepare for avian influenza (AI), a virus that commonly affects birds and has been transmitted to humans in Asia.

The funding is part of a larger request submitted by President Bush to implement the National Strategy to Safeguard Against the Danger of Pandemic Influenza.

The funds include:

- \$18M to control AI in Asian countries where the virus is currently endemic and to provide technical assistance in high-risk countries;
- \$10M to increase current animal vaccine stockpile by 40M doses;
- \$32M for surveillance and diagnostic measures;
- \$9M for smuggling intervention;
- \$7M for research and development of improved tools like vaccines and genome sequencing; and
- \$9M for planning and preparedness training and the development of simulation models.

Additional information about USDA avian influenza efforts can be found at www.usda.gov/birdflu or on the U.S. Government's comprehensive website at www.pandemicflu.gov.



Action on Texas' proposed premises registration regulations postponed

Commissioners for the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the state's livestock and poultry health regulatory agency, postponed taking action at a February meeting on proposed premises registration regulations that would take effect July 1. A subsequent meeting to consider the proposed regulations on March 23 has been canceled.

House Bill 1361, passed and signed into law in 2005, authorized the TAHC to institute an animal identification program consistent with the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), and to collect fees, to offset some costs of agency operations.

"Although the TAHC commissioners recognize the need for an improved animal identification system, they need additional time to consider complaints regarding the \$10 per year fee; concerns about livestock and poultry identification and reporting requirements that, eventually, may be implemented on a national basis; and fears about the potential loss of privacy," said Dr. Bob Hillman, Texas' state veterinarian and TAHC executive director.

Premises registration is required in Wisconsin and North Carolina. In Indiana, registration will be required starting Sept. 1. Premises registration currently is voluntary in all other states, and Texas has registered more than 8,000 premises – farms, ranches or other facilities – on a voluntary



basis out of an estimated 200,000 across the expansive state.

"We are seeking from the U.S. Department of Agriculture clear direction on (NAIS) timelines for implementation," said Hillman.

The next scheduled meeting of the Commission is May 4. However, the agenda for that meeting will not be developed until late April, according to Hillman.

"It is too early to know whether the proposed regulations will be considered at that meeting."

Model food emergency response plan developed

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in cooperation with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced the availability of a model Food Emergency Response Plan Template. The goal of the response plan is to enhance the protection of the nation's agricultural industry and food security through prevention, detection, response and recovery.

The template provides states with a guide to develop either a stand-alone emergency response plan for responding to a food-related emergency or an addendum to an existing all-hazard state emergency response plan. Useful planning tools include documents previously developed in cooperation with the DHS - national planning scenarios, target capabilities, and uniform task lists.

"FDA remains vigilant in its mission to protect our country's food supply and continues to maintain collaborative partnerships with our federal and state partners by

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AAVLD, USAHA advocate enhancing nation's veterinary diagnostic lab network

Strengthening the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) was a primary focus of the joint meeting of the Committee on Government Relations and other officials of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) in Washington, D.C., Feb. 12-16.

According to Dr. Bret Marsh, USAHA President, only 12 of the nation's state and university veterinary diagnostic laboratories are now "up to speed" - that is, supplied with modern up-to-date equipment and trained technicians so they can deal with foreign animal disease outbreaks. "With the nation currently facing the threat of H5N1 avian influenza, laboratory diagnostic capability is critical," Marsh said.

The NAHLN, which began as a

pilot project in 2002, is currently composed of just 12 state and university veterinary diagnostic laboratories linked together with a secure communication, reporting and alert system. These laboratories have been provided with upgraded equipment and personnel to give them the capability to make preliminary diagnoses of certain foreign animal diseases, such as avian influenza, foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and classical swine fever (CSF - also known as hog cholera). The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratory and Plum Island Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, where diagnosis of foreign diseases is confirmed, are also part of the NAHLN.

Funding for up-to-date equipment, laboratory reagents and trained personnel is essential to bring the remaining laboratories

up to speed. "This will enable the United States not only to better deal with endemic animal diseases," Marsh said, "but also outbreaks of foreign animal disease - whether introduced accidentally or by terrorist groups." Full implementation of the NAHLN will cost \$90 million for equipment and materials plus \$35 million annually for operating expenses.

"Quick and accurate laboratory diagnosis is key to the control and eventual elimination of animal diseases," he added.

Marsh pointed out that if an outbreak of avian influenza or some other foreign animal disease were to occur, our current laboratory diagnostic capability could be quickly overwhelmed. "If action is not taken to remedy this situation," he said, "we will be facing the same kind of criticism now being leveled at Hurricane Katrina responders."

planning for, monitoring and reacting to any potential threats," said Dr. Robert E. Brackett, director of FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. "By collaborating more closely with our partners involved in food safety and security, we will better leverage all of the available resources to be better prepared for any food emergency incident."

Because a food emergency could occur at any point from farm to fork, including pre-harvest production, processing, and distribution, states can use the template to develop useful plans to manage a food emergency. In addition, states can establish a uniform structure and content that will result in

response plans that are similar in structure, scope, and response operations among all states.

A food-related emergency involves the unintentional or deliberate contamination, threatened or actual, of food that impacts or may impact human health. A food emergency response plan does not apply to food incidents routinely handled by local or state health departments.

The response plan includes the following:

- Concept of Operations - establishes the framework for actions (i.e., specific functions of a response) that will take place during an incident response.

- Activation Levels - establish activation levels that provide decision makers with definitions of various degrees of an emergency.
- Principal Parties - identification of all agencies, organizations and individuals (principal parties) needed to carry out the response.
- Roles and responsibilities for state, federal, tribal, and local agencies and the private sector.

The Food Emergency Response Plan Template is available on the NASDA web site at www.nasda.org.

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the entire industry.”

The North Carolina Dairy Producers Association (NCDPA) and the Carolina-Virginia Dairy Products Association have spearheaded efforts to develop a viable FMD industry model with surrounding states that could be easily implemented and allow for the continuation of business for producers and processors if a FMD outbreak was to occur.

Collaborators on this task force include NCDACS, North Carolina State University (NCSU), North Carolina Farm Bureau and the North Carolina Dairy Foundation.

The North Carolina chapter of

“Even if I don’t have FMD on my farm, if I can’t move feed in and move milk out, I’ll go broke within two weeks.”

*NORMAN JORDAN, PRESIDENT
NORTH CAROLINA DAIRY PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION*

the nationally expanding State Animal Response Teams, a non-profit grass roots effort formed in the aftermath of 1999’s Hurricane Floyd, is also a collaborator and the point group in this effort. The group is currently chaired by Dr. Len Bull, an animal scientist with NCSU.

Two week window

“Even if I don’t have FMD on

my farm, if I can’t move feed in and move milk out, I’ll go broke within two weeks,” says Norman Jordan, president of NCDPA and a business continuity task force member. Jordan milks 50 registered Brown Swiss near Siler City, N.C.

“It’s important to me to have a viable plan in place to keep our entire industry functioning in the event of an FMD outbreak and maintain the availability of food for the public,” Jordan emphasizes. “As part of that plan, producers need to know what to do to remain negative and prove that they are, and processors need to know what to do to prevent disease spread with their trucks. On the regulatory side, standards are needed on how milk samples should be handled. We also need more research on how to increase resistance to FMD.”

Public and private sector stakeholders representing North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee and Maryland, plus USDA, attended an August 2005 workshop focused on the business continuity challenges that the dairy industry in North Carolina would face if FMD should occur on the east coast of the United States.

The workshop highlighted several key response objectives:

1. Improved understanding on the part of the public sector and key stakeholders of raw milk movements and the multi state dairy creamery network North Carolina producers use to market milk.

Stakeholder issues

The August 2005 North Carolina dairy industry business continuity workshop identified several issues that must be addressed by all stakeholders:

1. USDA and individual states need to move business continuity to the forefront when planning FAD response. “Until recently it wasn’t even on the radar screen,” says Dr. Jimmy Tickel, a veterinary specialist with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

2. Regional planning is the key to successfully addressing the various challenges that the diversity of agriculture from state to state presents when dealing with FAD outbreaks.

3. Animal agriculture cannot withstand an outbreak and response that parallels the UK experience. Current technology as outlined in the workshop needs to be incorporated into response strategy.

4. Industry has to be chal-

lenged and allowed to play a larger role in response planning. “The dairy industry in North Carolina continues to push the envelope nationally despite its small size,” Tickel says.

5. States and state veterinarians are limited in FAD response planning. “Many of the issues are national in perspective and currently, state officials are having problems integrating the knowledge coming out of their states into regional type planning efforts,” Tickel elaborates. “USDA could aid that effort greatly.”

State officials are constrained in their planning efforts because the U.S. currently follows a national plan that does not address how animal agricultural production systems vary across the country, Tickel emphasizes. “The national plan needs to address that diversity through regional planning efforts spearheaded by states and agribusinesses located in those regions,” he says.

2. Development of biosecurity standard operating procedures for dairy producers and milk plants combined with creation of a biosecurity model farm and plant to use as a teaching tool for the industry.

3. Acceptance of the concept of proof of status testing such that milk can move from negative farms in non-infected areas based on farms maintaining and proving a negative status. To that end, a surveillance standard operating procedure was developed and proposed to USDA as a national model using most current testing technology.

"We have to show USDA that we can isolate the area of FMD contamination and still move milk outside the contaminated area, regardless of state lines," Buddy Gaither says. "We are at the trial stage now, with a preliminary plan. But it's absolutely critical that we finalize a regional plan before disaster happens." ■

By Linda L. Leake
Contributing Writer

State Animal Response Teams



State Animal Response Teams (SART) are interagency state organizations dedicated to preparing, planning, responding and recovering during animal emergencies in the United States. SART is a public private partnership, joining government agencies with the private concerns around the common goal of animal issues during disasters. SART programs train participants to facilitate a safe, environmentally sound and efficient response to animal emergencies on the local, county, state and federal level.

The teams are organized under the auspices of state and local emergency management utilizing the principles of the Incident Command System (ICS), which was developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and has been recognized by the Department of Homeland Security as the most effective system for managing emergencies.

This system has been universal-

ly adopted as part of the National Emergency Response System.

Using ICS as a set of core principles, SART develops units for addressing all aspects of disaster response. The organization's structure is organized on the grassroots level with County Animal Response Teams (CARTS). CARTs work under the jurisdiction of the county emergency management, and include animal control officers, Cooperative Extension, sheriff's personnel, veterinarians, forestry officers, animal industry leaders and concerned citizens.

North Carolina gave rise to SART after 1999's Hurricane Floyd, during which more than 3 million domestic and farm animals were lost. Many could have been saved by a coordinated emergency response plan, SART leaders contend.

For more information, check out: www.sartusa.org.

NIAA Annual Meeting to focus on Business Continuity, Disaster Recovery Planning

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning: Applying a Full-Court Press for Animal Agriculture is the theme for the 2006 Annual Meeting of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA).

Scheduled for April 3-6 at the Galt House Hotel & Suites in Louisville, Ky., the annual gathering will engage producers, veterinarians, business executives, scientists, academicians, state and federal regulatory officials and other stakeholders from across the animal agriculture industry.

The theme of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning will run throughout the



Dr. Len Bull

entire meeting, including a final symposium which will center on a hypothetical outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the U.S., according to NIAA Board member Dr. Leonard Bull, who is chairing the program committee for the symposium.

"Increasing threats of intentional as well as the unintentional introduction of a devastating foreign animal disease, and the prospects of natural disasters such as the devastating hurricanes that we have just experienced, have us focused on the future of our industry," said Bull, a professor of animal science at North Carolina State University and chairman of the North Carolina

State Animal Response Team (SART). "A full-court press is needed to ensure that prevention and biosecurity measures are in place, response is rapid and deliberate, and business continuity is achievable."

The symposium will address the steps that need to be taken from the onset of a disaster to the resumption of business and on toward full recovery and will feature some of the world's leading experts on the disease as well as on disaster management and planning.

Program and registration information for the annual meeting and the special symposium is available on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org. ■

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Busy quarter for BSE-related news

BSE diagnosed in Alabama cow

The third case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE, mad cow disease) has turned up in a beef cow located on an Alabama farm, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported on March 13.

The National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa, confirmed the diagnosis using the Western blot test, according to USDA Chief Veterinary Officer John Clifford. A rapid test conducted at the University of Georgia initially provided an "inconclusive" test result, causing animal health officials to seek further testing.

"The Western blot test has returned a positive result, and that is sufficient for us to confirm this animal to be positive for BSE," said Clifford. Another confirmatory test, the immunohistochemistry (IHC) test was also to be conducted, but USDA considers an animal positive for BSE if either of the two confirmatory tests returns a positive result.

The infected cow was nonambulatory, or unable to walk, and was euthanized by a local veterinarian who obtained a brain sample for testing of the brain-wasting disease.

An epidemiological investigation is underway, but Clifford said early indications point to the animal being 10 years or older, suggesting the Santa Gertrudis cow may have been born before the U.S. and Canada banned the practice of ruminant-to-ruminant feeding in 1997, which scientific research has indicated is the more likely route for BSE transmission.

It is hoped the investigation will provide more information on the herd of origin of the animal that had only resided in the subject herd for less than a year. Officials will then try to locate any animals from the same birth herd and any offspring for subsequent testing and slaughter.

Clifford said that experience worldwide "has shown us that it is highly unusual to find BSE in more than one animal in a herd or in an affected animal's offspring."

Clifford stressed that the positive animal did not enter the human or animal feed chains. "I want to emphasize that human and animal health in the United States are protected by a system of interlocking safeguards, and that we remain very confident in the safety of U.S. beef."

Since the enhanced BSE surveillance program was put in place in 2004 following the first diagnosis of BSE in the U.S., more than 650,000 animals from the highest risk populations have been tested. The Alabama cow is only the second of these high-risk animals to test positive in the enhanced surveillance program, Clifford said.

Regardless, the latest diagnosis is expected to complicate already-contentious trade negotiations with Japan and other key trading partners, according to industry analysts.

Breach in export procedures halts shipments to Japan

Japan has, once again, closed its borders to U.S. beef products following an ineligible shipment of veal originating from a New York

processing plant that made its way there in January.

An investigation by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and an audit by the Office of Inspector General concluded that mistakes were made by the plant involved with the shipment and by USDA inspection personnel. Those mistakes resulted from a lack of understanding of which products were eligible for shipment to Japan. The ineligible product included veal with the vertebral column intact and veal offal.

The material in question originated from cattle under 30 months of age and, for that reason, is not considered specified risk materials by U.S. standards. However, its removal is a specification in the export agreement with Japan due to their differing standards.

A 475-page document prepared by USDA, which has been relayed to Japanese officials, details the findings of the investigation and actions taken by USDA. The report lays out the unique circumstances surrounding the shipment: it was the first shipment of veal sent to Japan; only two plants were certified to ship veal to Japan; and both of them were de-listed before any other shipments were sent to Japan. In addition, veal had only recently been added to the U.S. export agreement with Japan.

The investigation also found that FSIS inspection program personnel at the establishment were not sufficiently aware of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Export Verification program and should not have certified or approved the shipment of ineligible product to Japan.

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns said that his agency has and is taking a series of steps in response to the incident and subsequent findings. "I believe our actions fully address the facts that

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led to this incident and provide added protections on a broader scale to prevent similar problems in the future."

Johanns has agreed to a request from Japanese officials to conduct inspections of U.S. beef processing plants before lifting the ban.

"We support USDA in taking the immediate necessary steps to see that this violation is addressed and that every assurance is given to Japanese government and consumers that U.S. beef remains safe," said National Cattlemen's Beef Association CEO Terry Stokes.

The report is available on the Internet at www.fsis.usda.gov.

Office of Inspector General issues findings on misdiagnosed BSE test

An audit report issued by USDA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) earlier this year is critical of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service' (APHIS) handling of a November 2004 inconclusive test result for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE, mad cow disease) that later turned out to be positive.

According to the OIG report, USDA announced that its rapid screening test produced an inconclusive BSE test result. A contract laboratory ran its rapid screening test on a brain sample collected for testing and produced three "high positive" reactive results. As required, the report said, the contract laboratory forwarded the inconclusive sample to APHIS' National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) for confirmation. NVSL repeated the rapid screening test, which again produced three high positive reactive results. Following established protocol,

NVSL ran its confirmatory test, an immunohistochemistry (IHC) test, which was interpreted as negative for BSE.

Faced with conflicting results between the rapid screening and IHC tests, the OIG report says, "NVSL scientists recommended additional testing to resolve the discrepancy but APHIS headquarters officials concluded that no further testing was necessary since testing protocols were followed and the confirmatory test was negative." APHIS officials explained to OIG investigators that the IHC test is internationally recognized as the "gold standard" of testing and they believed conducting additional tests would undermine confidence in USDA's testing protocols.

After the OIG pressured the agency to conduct additional testing, the internationally recognized Weybridge Laboratory in England conducted various tests on the sample, including their own IHC tests and three Western blot tests, ultimately confirming that the cow was, in fact, infected with BSE. This prompted Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns to direct USDA scientists to work with international experts to develop new protocols that include performing dual confirmatory tests in the event of an inconclusive BSE screening test.

"We attribute the failure to identify the BSE positive sample to rigid protocols, as well as the lack of adequate quality assurance controls over its testing program," the OIG report states.

APHIS Administrator Dr. Ron DeHaven said on Feb. 2 that a number of suggestions in the report had already been implemented. "We are pleased that OIG has concurred with the policy and operational actions proposed by APHIS for addressing their recommendations."

The OIE report also looks at BSE

surveillance goals and objectives, controls to prevent BSE in the food supply and a number of paperwork issues. It is complimentary of the enhanced BSE surveillance effort in many areas, acknowledging the significant efforts USDA has made in developing the necessary infrastructure, processes and controls in a short amount of time.

OIG stated that it is in general agreement "with APHIS' and FSIS' proposed corrective actions and have accepted management decisions for all recommendations."

The full report is available on the Internet at www.usda.gov/oig.

Canada finds another BSE positive

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has closed an epidemiological investigation that followed the diagnosis of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE, mad cow disease) on Jan. 22 in a six-year-old crossbred cow born and raised in the Alberta province.

The investigation traced two of the affected animal's offspring and 156 cattle born on the farm of origin within 12 months before and after the affected animal's birth. No additional cases were detected.

Although a definitive origin could not be confirmed, CFIA believes that the animal's feed was likely contaminated during its manufacture, transport or storage. This conclusion is said to be consistent with the experiences of most BSE-affected countries where BSE continues to be detected, in diminishing numbers, in animals born after the implementation of feed controls.

The investigation concluded that the geographic location and age of the animal are consistent with the three domestic cases previously detected in Canada. ■

U.S. delegation travels to South America to encourage FMD eradication

“The eradication of FMD in South America is an important goal in safeguarding animal health in the U.S. The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) encourages USDA, in partnership with the private sector, to continue to collaborate with U.S. agencies, international organizations and other groups to support, coordinate and enhance the hemispheric plan for FMD eradication.”

- NIAA Resolution # 15

A group of seven agriculture industry leaders traveled to South America in January to visit with public and private animal health repre-

sentatives in Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay about foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) eradication efforts. Staff with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service International Services (APHIS-IS) helped arrange the trip and accompanied the delegation to the different countries.

“The recent outbreaks of FMD in Brazil and Argentina and our mission's finding reemphasized the need to eliminate this disease before it reaches the United States,” stated Philip



U.S. private sector representative Philip Bradshaw (second from left) participates in a panel discussion in Rio de Janeiro during the USA mission to South America on FMD.

NIAA Annual Meeting to provide FMD briefings

Dr. Sebastiao Costa Guedes, who chairs the Inter-American Group for the Eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease (GIEFA), will be a featured speaker during the opening general session of the 2006 Annual Meeting of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture, on Monday, April 3, in Louisville, Ky.

In addition, members of the U.S. delegation to South America

will comprise a panel during the NIAA Animal Health and International Trade Committee meeting on Tuesday, April 4, sharing their perspectives from the January mission and what it will take to achieve FMD eradication from the hemisphere by 2010.

Program and registration information is available on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org.



Bradshaw who coordinated the mission. Bradshaw is the private sector representative for the U.S. serving on the Inter-American Group for the Eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease (GIEFA).

In 2005, GIEFA representatives unveiled the Hemispheric Action Plan for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease, which provides country, region or zone-specific strategies for eradicating FMD from the Americas by 2010.

During the trip, the U.S. delegation met with agricultural ministers and industry leaders in Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay to urge their embrace of the GIEFA action plan. They toured the Pan American Foot-and Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA), which is operated by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) of the World Health Organization, and met with American diplomats at the U.S. Embassies in each country to brief them on the plan.

Bradshaw, a former USAHA president and chairman of the board of the Livestock Conservation Institute, predecessor to the NIAA, and the group will meet in Washington, D.C. on March 23 to brief U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns' senior staff. “We feel a very strong statement of support for the eradication of FMD from South America is needed.”

Since the Hemispheric Plan was developed, Brazil diagnosed FMD in October of last year and, following the U.S. mission in January, Argentina endured an FMD outbreak.

It appears that despite past progress, there are several regions in South America that continue to have endemic FMD. These zones are reported to have coexisting structural and operational deficiencies in the delivery of necessary veterinary services. These zones include Venezuela, Ecuador and the Chaco Region that includes parts of Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina.

"Although there have been some recent setbacks in their progress, I am confident the South American countries understand the importance of eradicating FMD from the Western Hemisphere," said U.S. Animal Health Association president Dr. Bret Marsh. "They have pledged to aggressively pursue the goal of eradicating FMD by the year 2010."

Dr. Alfonso Torres, director of the Animal Health Diagnostic Center at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, and who chairs NIAA's Animal Health and International Trade Committee, served as GIEFA chair through the strategic plan development process. He stepped down in October 2005 and was replaced by Dr. Sebastiao



PHOTO COURTESY OF PANAFTOSA

Dr. Sebastiao Guedes of Brazil discusses various aspects of the action plan to eradicate FMD from the Western Hemisphere by 2010.

"The recent outbreaks of FMD in Brazil and Argentina and our mission's finding reemphasized the need to eliminate this disease before it reaches the United States."

PHILIP BRADSHAW
GIEFA
REPRESENTATIVE
FROM
THE U.S.

Costa Guedes, who heads the trade association serving the Brazilian cattle industry (CNPC).

NIAA president and chief executive officer Glenn Slack said the tasks that lie ahead are huge, but not insurmountable. "There is usually a reason that an endemic disease such as FMD festers in a few areas long after it has been eradicated in surrounding regions.

"We know from past eradication efforts that the last remaining vestiges of endemic disease are the hardest to rid," said Slack. "But, we

U.S. Delegation on FMD to South America

Philip Bradshaw, Chairman, Animal Agriculture Initiative, United Soybean Board

Judd Hulting, Special Projects Director, Illinois Soybean Association

Kendell Keith, President, National Grain & Feed Association

Bret Marsh, DVM, President, U. S. Animal Health Association

Dave Harlan, Director, Global Animal Health & Food Safety, Cargill, Inc.

Glenn Slack, President & CEO, National Institute for Animal Agriculture

Patrick Webb, DVM, Director, Swine Health Programs, National Pork Board

also know from past efforts that a collaborative effort by the public and private sector can accomplish the goal. The GIEFA action plan instills the required collaboration needed." ■



PHOTO COURTESY OF PANAFTOSA

The U.S. delegation pose for a group photo with officials and staff from the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, following a thorough briefing and tour.

Members in the news

Miles to Chair NIAA Poultry Health Committee

Dr. Andrea Miles, a member of the **American Association of Avian Pathologists** (AAAP), has been appointed chairperson of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) Poultry Health Committee.



Dr. Andrea Miles

Miles is a public health surveillance veterinarian with the Emergency Programs division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA).

NIAA Chairman of the Board Rick Sibbel said Miles' appointment signals NIAA's intent to provide a solid framework to assist poultry industry stakeholders in addressing poultry health issues. "We are fortunate to have someone with Dr. Miles' experience and expertise to lead this committee."

Miles is a 1989 graduate of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. She received a Ph.D. in Animal Science from the University of Delaware in 2000. She is a Diplomat in the American College of Poultry Veterinarians.

Prior to her current position at NCDA, Miles was the Eastern regional poultry epidemiologist for USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services. Previously, she was an assistant professor in the Dept. of Population Health and Pathobiology at the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Miles also headed up veterinary research development at Embrex, Inc. at North Carolina's Research Triangle

Park for several years in the early 1990's.

In addition to her involvement with AAAP and NIAA, Miles is a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the World Veterinary Poultry Association and the U.S. Animal Health Association, where she serves on the Transmissible Diseases of Poultry Committee.

Jerry Torrison serving on AVMA committee

Dr. Jerry Torrison, associate clinical professor, **University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine**, was recently chosen to serve as Vice Chair of the Animal Agriculture Liaison Committee (AALC) of the American Veterinary Medical Association. Dr. John Short, representing the National Chicken Council, was elected chair.



Dr. Jerry Torrison

Torrison was appointed last year by NIAA Chairman of the

Board Rick Sibbel as NIAA's representative to the AALC.

Cindy Wolf named Small Ruminant Practitioner of the Year

Dr. Cindy Wolf, a small ruminant specialist with the **University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine**, was named the 2005 Donald E. Bailey Small Ruminant Practitioner of the Year by the **American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners (AASRP)**.



Dr. Cindy Wolf with former AASRP president Dr. Paul Jones

Wolf chairs the NIAA Sheep and Goat Health Committee and is team leader for NIAA's National Scrapie Education Initiative. ■



Dr. Bob Hillman (left), Texas Animal Health Commission and Dr. Bret Marsh (right), Indiana State Board of Animal Health, both representing the U.S. Animal Health Assn., met with Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns in January to discuss the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). (See story, Page 2)

NIAA welcomes the following new members!!

State-level Associations & Publicly Supported Institutions/Agencies:

Agri-Tracabilite Quebec, Inc.
Ms. Linda Marchand
 555 Boul. Roland-Therrien
 Longueuil, Quebec J4H 4E8

Institut Animale de Sante Animale
Dr. Martine Dubuc
 200 Chemin Ste-Foy 11 e tage
 Quebec G1R 4X6

Jackson State University
National Center for Biodefense
Communications
Ms. Elizabeth J. Matlock
 1230 Raymond Road, #900
 Jackson, MS 39204

Vermont Agency of Agriculture,
Food & Markets
Dr. Kerry Rood
 116 State Street, Drawer 20
 Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

Individual Members (Self-employed)

Dr. Beth Lautner
 5744 Wentworth Dr.
 Johnston, IA 50131

Affiliate Membership (Non-voting)

Lawrence Livermore National
Laboratory

Dr. Pamela Hullinger
 7000 East Avenue L-211
 Livermore, CA 94551

Dr. Gary M. Weber
 735 Evergreen Road
 Severn, MD 21144

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

Renewing members! (during the past quarter)

National Associations & Commercial Organizations:

American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Association of Equine Practitioners
American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Horse Council
American Veterinary Medical Association
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC)
Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica
eMerge Interactive
Farnam Companies, Inc.
Global VetLink, L.C.
Hawkeye Steel Products, Inc.
IDEXX Laboratories, Inc.
Iowa Select Farms
Livestock Marketing Association
Micro Beef Technologies Ltd.
Monsanto Company
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Renderers Association
PIC USA
Propig.com
Temple Tag, Ltd.
Viral Antigens, Inc.
WestfaliaSurge, Inc.
Wiechman Pig Company, Inc.
Y-TEX Corporation

State-level Associations & Publicly Supported Institutions/Agencies:

Arizona Department of Agriculture
California Department of Food and Agriculture
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Systems
Clemson University, Livestock Poultry Health and State Veterinarian's Office
Colorado State University, Extension/Animal Science
Cornell University Animal Health Diagnostic Center
Idaho State Department of Agriculture
Illinois Beef Association
Illinois Department of Agriculture
Illinois Farm Bureau
Illinois Pork Producers Association
Indiana Farm Bureau
Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
Iowa Pork Producers Association
Kansas Animal Health Department
Kentucky Beef Network
Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation
Maine Department of Agriculture
Michigan Pork Producers Association
Mississippi Board of Animal Health
New Mexico Livestock Board

New York Department of Agriculture and Markets
North Carolina Pork Council
North Carolina State University Department of Animal Science
Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
Tennessee Department of Agriculture
Texas Animal Health Commission
Texas Farm Bureau
University of California School of Veterinary Medicine
Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
Washington State Department of Agriculture
Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium
Wyoming Livestock Board

Individual Members (Self-employed)

Dr. Jack Anderson
Dr. Angela Baysinger
Dr. Julie Ann Jarvinen
Dr. Don Sanders

Affiliate Membership (Non-voting)

Dalton EID Systems Ltd.
Dr. Mary Giddens
GrowSafe Systems, Ltd.
MAF Vet Services, PA
National Bison Association
National Meat Association
Optimal Ag Consulting, Inc.

DHS pursues National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility

The Department of Homeland Security, along with partnering federal agencies, has initiated plans for a National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). The facility would serve as the next-generation biological and agricultural defense facility to replace the important but aging facility at Plum Island, N.Y.

The facility will research high-consequence biological threats involving human, zoonotic and foreign animal diseases. The 500,000 square foot facility is still in the planning phase.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 9 (HSPD-9) identified the need for "safe, secure, and state-of-the-art agriculture biocontainment laboratories that research and develop diagnostic capabilities for foreign animal and zoonotic diseases." Although the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC) currently performs much of this research, at the present there are no facilities in the United States that have adequate containment, security, equipment and infrastructure to meet the require-

ments identified in the presidential directive.



Homeland Security

The NBAF will serve as a unique Biosafety Level (BSL) 3 and BSL 4 live-stock laboratory capable of developing countermeasures for foreign animal diseases that are currently investigated at the aging Plum Island Animal Disease Center. It will also provide advanced test and evaluation capability for threat detection, vulnerability, and countermeasure assessment for animal and zoonotic diseases and support licensure of vaccine countermeasures developed through essential animal model testing and evaluation.

Nearing the end of its lifecycle, the Plum Island facility was built in the 1950s and the agency has stated that its mission requires replacing PIADC with a new facility.

As a 50-plus year old facility,

PIADC is becoming increasingly more costly to maintain. The laboratory and test space is reportedly insufficient to support the increasing levels of research and development needed to meet the growing concerns about accidental or intentional introduction of foreign animal diseases into the U.S., and has been deemed inappropriate for zoonotic disease research.

Currently, DHS is requesting Expressions of Interest from federal agencies, state and local governments, industry, academia, interested parties and organizations for potential locations that would accommodate the construction and operations of the NBAF.

Interested parties wishing to make an Expression of Interest should do so in writing by March 31 to ensure consideration. More information is available in a Jan. 19, 2006 *Federal Register* notice (Pgs. 3107-3109), available online at www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/. Information is also available at www.dhs.gov/nbaf or from Glynis Fisher at glynis.fisher@dhs.gov. ■

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Beth Lautner leaves Plum Island post



Dr. Beth Lautner

Dr. Beth Lautner has vacated her position as director of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center.

According to a news report in the *East Hampton Independent*, Lautner says there is nothing unusual about her leaving. "Directors come and go; that is the nature of the position," she said.

The Long Island newspaper said she is looking forward to heading home where she plans to spend time with her family and take some time off before pursuing another position. Lautner said she expects

"to remain actively engaged in the future in the animal health area," the newspaper reported.

Lautner took the reins at Plum Island in January 2004 from Marc Hollander, who had been in charge since DHS took over responsibility of Plum Island from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in June of 2003. Previously, she served as vice president of science and technology at the National Pork Board.

The well-respected Lautner, a long-time leader in pork industry and animal health issues, is a former chair of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture's Animal Health and International Trade committee and was the 2002 recipient of the NIAA Meritorious Service Award.