

# Sheep HEALTH REPORT

A National Institute for Animal Agriculture Publication

Winter 2002

## APHIS to Consider Rule Changes For Scrapie Eradication Program

A number of changes to streamline and simplify some of the regulations governing certain aspects of the scrapie eradication program that went into effect last year are being considered, according to officials of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-Veterinary Service (APHIS-VS), at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA.)

Meeting with industry leaders and producers at the American Sheep Industry Association annual convention, Dr. Michael Gilsdorf, Chief, National Animal Health Program Staff, APHIS, unveiled nearly 20 possible

changes to the regulation. Dr. Gilsdorf and Dr. Diane Sutton, National Scrapie Eradication Program Coordinator, also encour-

aged the industry to suggest other changes to improve the program. Most of the proposed changes are aimed at streamlining record keeping from farm to market. Other changes involve definitions, including commingling.



Register. After that happens, only official comments will be considered. Publication may take several months," according to Dr. Sutton. The basic rules for individual identification and transporting sheep and goats across state lines remain unchanged. Therefore, producers must continue to identify their animals as prescribed. As of late January, about 11 percent of the industry had obtained official premises ID numbers.

"During the next several months, the first time a producer is found

to not be in compliance with the rule, he/she will be told by APHIS officials about the new regulations and advised on how to comply. Once the producer has been given an adequate opportunity to acquire official identification, if another shipment of animals comes in 'not

in compliance,' stronger measures will be taken," Dr. Sutton said.

Information on the accelerated scrapie eradication program can be found on the Internet at [www.animalagriculture.org/scrapie](http://www.animalagriculture.org/scrapie) or [www.aphis.usda.gov/scrapie.htm](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/scrapie.htm), or by calling 1-866-873-2824.

Dr. Sutton said that while the various proposed changes are under consideration, APHIS-VS may suspend enforcement of very specific aspects of the rule during the comment period and until final decisions are made. She said that APHIS-VS also intends to purpose for comment other amendments to the rule.

"We will take input on these possible changes and suggestions on other areas of concern until the suspensions and proposal are published for comment in the Federal

**ERADICATE SCRAPIE!**  
NATIONAL SCRAPIE EDUCATION INITIATIVE

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## New Look, New Editor for Sheep Health Report

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture welcomes you to our re-designed *Sheep Health Report*.

This quarterly newsletter provides a communications link between producers, practitioners, researchers, academicians, government veterinarians and regulatory personnel. Now, you can expect more timely dissemination of industry news, plus a more reader-friendly format.

To direct the editorial, NIAA has contracted with veteran agricultural journalist Dean Houghton of JDH Communications, Polo, Mo. This award-winning journalist has received Writer of the Year and Photographer of the Year honors by the American Agricultural Editors Association. Dean also has a strong background in sheep production as a partner in his family's Houghton Hampshires breeding flock.

We're fortunate to have Dean join the NIAA team and help lead efforts to bring you information and expert analysis on industry issues pertinent to sheep health, research and production advancements, plus disease control and eradication strategies.

We welcome your input and suggestions as we work toward making *Sheep Health Report* a valuable resource for you.

—Glenn N. Slack, CEO, NIAA



## Sheep Health Report

Winter 2002

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*Sheep Health Report* provides the latest information on issues pertinent to sheep health initiatives, strategies, research and regulatory action. It is a communications initiative of the NIAA Sheep Health Committee and is produced in cooperation with USDA-APHIS. Reprinting is encouraged.

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### Upcoming Events

## Sheep Group to Discuss Scrapie Research and Rules

Scrapie research, rules and regulations will be the focus of the Sheep Health Committee of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture when it meets March 26 in Chicago. (For more information on the NIAA annual meeting, see page 8.)

Scheduled for Tuesday, March 26, starting at 8 a.m., presentation topics at this year's sheep health meeting will include:

- Scrapie Research—Past, Present and Future
- Scrapie Rule/Slaughter Surveillance
- Lessons Learned from a Depop of a Large Scrapie Flock
- Scrapie Eartags—What Can Be Done to Improve Them?

A panel discussion will address scrapie regulations compliance in different states and how the scrapie program is progressing. Several state veterinarians are expected to serve on the panel.

The NIAA Sheep Health Committee business meeting will follow the seminar.

**INDIVIDUALS INTERESTED** in stimulating growth in the domestic

sheep industry and in developing a competitive advantage for his or her own sheep operation should consider attending the 2002 Howard Wyman Sheep Industry Leadership School.

Coordinator for the program is Dr. Steve LeValley, Extension sheep and wool specialist at Colorado State University.

The annual event, to be held July 21-24 in Greeley, Colo., is sponsored by the National Lamb Feeders Association. For an application, call (503) 370-7024; e-mail: [info@nlfa-sheep.org](mailto:info@nlfa-sheep.org).

**ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION** will be the focus of a summer conference and trade show sponsored by NIAA. ID/INFO EXPO 2002 will take place July 29, 30, 31 and Aug. 1 in Chicago. It will feature the National Food Animal Identification Symposium, plus a trade show featuring manufacturers and service providers in the animal ID and information systems business.

To be included on the mailing list for the event, visit the Internet site [www.animalagriculture.org/id](http://www.animalagriculture.org/id) and fill out a request card.

# A Commitment to Safe Food

*Proposed FY 2003 budget built up to bring risks down*

Since Sept. 11, the U.S. has re-evaluated priorities and strengthened defenses. USDA is now working with the Office of Homeland Security, along with other federal agencies, states and industry, to examine immediate emergency needs and develop longer-term strategies to continue protecting America's agricultural systems.

Another way to protect agriculture is to boost the budget of USDA programs. On Feb. 4, the Bush Administration released a budget proposal for fiscal year 2003 that includes \$2.367 billion to fight sabotage and protect the nation's food supply from plant and animal diseases. That amount is up \$146 million from the current USDA budget.

President Bush's Defense Appropriations Act, signed Jan. 10, provides an additional \$328 million in USDA funding for homeland security protections. This includes \$105 million for APHIS pest and disease monitoring; \$80 million for upgrading USDA facilities and security; \$50 million for a bio-containment facility at the National Animal Disease Laboratory; \$40 million for the Agricultural Research Service; \$23 million for the Plum Island Animal Disease Center; \$15 million for security upgrades and bioterrorism protection for the FSIS; and \$14 million for increased security at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa.

"We're concerned about making sure our food supply is safe," said President Bush during a Feb. 8 speech at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association convention in Denver. "We're investing in training and technology at the Department of Agriculture to detect biological and chemical weapons. We're going to have an even swifter response to food contamination.

We've tripled the amount of money in the budget to prepare America against the very worst."

**Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman** is pleased with the Administration's commitment. "It's critical that we remain vigilant and work together to ensure the integrity of our food system," she said. The Secretary outlined the following areas in the FY 2003 budget that relate to animal protection:

- \$48 million increase for animal health monitoring to quickly identify potential threats and improve the emergency management system that coordinates and implements rapid response to an animal or plant pest or disease outbreak.
- \$19 million increase in the Agricultural Quarantine Inspection program. It will provide additional inspectors, expanding canine teams and high definition x-ray machines at high-risk ports of entry. It will build staffing at ports of entry to 3,974, a 55% increase since 1999.
- \$12 million increase for APHIS programs to expand diagnostic, response and management.
- \$28 million increase to support FSIS food safety activities, including 7,600 meat, poultry and egg products inspectors. Also includes \$14.5 million to improve information technology infrastructure and risk management systems and \$2.7 million for slaughter epidemiological surveys and risk prevention.
- \$34 million increase to support research aimed at protecting agriculture and food systems from diseases and pests and to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness in humans due to pathogens and other threats to the food supply.
- \$5 million increase to strengthen the capability of APHIS to assess and monitor outbreaks of diseases in foreign countries that have the potential to spread to the U.S.

## Floyd Horn Named Ag Advisor for Homeland Security



Dr. Floyd P. Horn has been appointed as the new Director of Food, Agriculture and Water Security, Prevention and Protection Senior Directorate, Office of Homeland Security. Horn is on detail from his position as Administrator of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. He will advise Gov. Tom Ridge on issues related to food and agriculture biosecurity.

In previous testimony to Congress, Horn expressed his concern for U.S. agriculture's terrorism risks. "The strength and value of the U.S. food and agricultural system makes it a vulnerable terrorist target," said Horn. "The ag sector accounts for some 13% of the U.S. gross national product and is a key part of the U.S. economy. By virtue of its efficiency and success, and compounded by recent trends toward concentration in the sector, the U.S. is vulnerable to an agricultural terrorism incident specifically targeting key animal and plant commodities."

The mission of the Homeland Security Office is to develop and coordinate the implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to secure the United States from terrorist threats or attacks.

# Texas Takes Steps to Prepare for Emergency Disease Outbreaks

Texas animal health officials have been equipped with emergency authority to fight a foreign animal disease outbreak. New emergency response and management regulations for the Texas Animal Health Commission, (TAHC), the state's livestock health regulatory authority, became effective January 1.

"New emergency response regulations will streamline our ability to immediately declare livestock movement restrictions statewide without waiting for the 12 TAHC commissioners to convene a meeting," said Dr. Linda Logan, Texas state veterinarian and TAHC executive director. "Any delays in action to stop disease spread could be costly for livestock producers."

Dr. Logan explained that the new regulations do not exclude the 12 governor-appointed TAHC commissioners, but allow her or designated deputies to act immediately on their behalf to fight the spread of disease. In an emergency, the commissioners would convene as quickly as possible in an open meeting to address the animal disease outbreak.

"The TAHC commissioners will retain ultimate authority, and they

will be involved in deliberations with industry stakeholders to direct the agency in responding to an emergency," commented Gene Snelson, TAHC general counsel. "Furthermore, this new authority will be used only when a foreign animal disease has been introduced into the state. While the TAHC



Dr. Linda Logan

always has had broad-based legal authority to eradicate or control livestock disease, the authority to be more direct in responding to such a livestock emergency must be legislatively modified. These new regulations, however, provide an interim framework to ensure that we can address problems if they arise prior to the next legislative session."

Foot-and-mouth disease is particularly difficult to battle because the virus can travel not only via live animals, but also on the wind, on clothing and footwear, on contaminated vehicles and equipment, in uncooked and undercooked meat products, and in manure, she said. "If the disease was introduced into Texas, and we halted livestock

movement immediately, we have a chance at stopping the spread of the disease. Until now, commissioners had to hold an emergency meeting in order to enact widespread livestock movement restrictions," she said.

The emergency response regulations also authorize the slaughter and disposal of infected and exposed animals, and provide for the TAHC to assist owners with obtaining any indemnity funds available from the state or federal government.

"Regulations, laws and extra manpower and equipment are helpful in an outbreak, but they will never take the place of our first line of defense: the livestock owner and private veterinary practitioner. Keeping a sharp eye on livestock and promptly reporting any unusual signs of disease could save billions of dollars in the long run," said Dr. Logan.

A hotline, operated cooperatively by the USDA and TAHC, is available 24 hours a day. A foreign animal disease diagnostician is always on call and can be reached by calling the toll-free number, 1-800-550-8242.

## Wisconsin Debates Agroterrorism Bill

A bill that would establish penalties for those who intentionally infect livestock with disease is making its way through the Wisconsin legislature.

The Assembly version of the bill was approved unanimously. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Sheila

Harsdorf, now awaits action in the state senate.

This legislation would establish penalties for people who intentionally infect livestock or wild deer with contagious or infectious diseases. The bill was amended to include poultry as well.

Under the measure, violators may be fined up to \$10,000 or serve up to 15 years in prison.

Sen. Harsdorf and her brother,

Wisconsin's Secretary of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Jim Harsdorf, are partners in the family dairy farm. He said the new agroterrorism policy is needed, especially after animal rights groups have threatened to bring deadly livestock diseases into the United States from other countries.

The bill is co-sponsored by 40 other state senators and assembly representatives.

## States Set Policy Against Extreme Tail Docking

In recent years, many 4-H and FFA exhibitors and show lamb producers have adopted the theory of "less is more" when it comes to docking tails. The practice, however, has drawn the attention of the American Veterinary Medical Association, which calls the procedure "extreme tail docking in sheep" and has called for the elimination of the practice.

Two western states have taken action against short tails. The

Wyoming State Fair has passed a rule that says all market lambs shown at the 2002 fair must be docked so the tail (dock) can be lifted. The Utah Junior Livestock Association also has initiated standards for tail length.

Docking or removing part of the tail of the lamb is a standard health procedure used for the animal's hygiene. The procedure minimizes the risk of fly strikes to the

lamb from waste accumulations. Exhibitors in recent years have pushed the limits, however, saying that a shorter tail makes the rump look more square and gives the hind leg a large, full look.

Extremely short docking can cause nerve damage and predispose lambs to rectal prolapse, according to veterinary researchers.

The American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Sheep Industry, the American Farm Bureau Federation, and the United States Animal Health Association sent a letter to the National 4-H Program Leader expressing concerns about the practice of extreme tail docking. The Wyoming Wool Growers Association also has taken a position recommending against extreme docking.

The Wyoming State Fair Advisory Committee voted earlier this year that lambs that have been extreme docked, redocked, or have complete tail removal will not be eligible to show at the Wyoming State Fair.

The Utah rule asks that sheep not be docked closer than "the distal end of the caudal tail fold." The association will use this show season as an educational opportunity and phase-in year, with strict compliance beginning Jan. 1, 2003.

## Two Named to Sheep Improvement Board

The National Sheep Industry Improvement Center (NSIIC) recently announced two producer members of its 2002 board of directors.

Jeff Siddoway was nominated by the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI). He became active in the family sheep operation in 1970. He and his wife, Cindy, a past president of ASI, run 11,500 ewes on 25,000 acres of privately held ground with grazing rights on an additional 295,000 acres in Idaho.

Siddoway has served as president of the Idaho Wool Growers Association and is a past director of

the American Sheep Producers Council and ASI. He also has served on USDA's National Animal Damage Control Advisory Board.

Linda Sours Campbell was reappointed for a second term. Sours Campbell is a dairy, meat and fiber goat producer in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. She began her operation in 1970. It now includes more than 500 goats, producing breeding stock for export and milk and cheese for local markets.

Sours Campbell has served as president of the American Dairy Goat Association.

## SSQA Program Gets Underway with 'Train-the-Trainers' Session

The sheep industry's new Sheep Safety and Quality Assurance Program (SSQA) is off to a fast start. Thirty-five people from 16 states enrolled in the "Train-the-Trainers" workshop held in February at Colorado State University.

SSQA was developed by the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) and Colorado State to help sheep producers follow and document proper procedures to help generate safe, high-quality lamb and wool products. SSQA trainers will help producers progress through three levels of the program

that involves education, development of SSQA plans and verification that plans are implemented.

Educational materials cover a wide range of topics, from proper sheep handling to how to keep paperwork in order. A heavy emphasis on herd health management includes sessions on biosecurity and discussions of the veterinary-client-patient relationship.

Producers will start off with an introduction to total quality management (TQM) principles made famous by W. Edwards Deming. He described TQM as "doing things

right the first time."

In the sheep industry, that means a producer cannot expect someone else in the production chain to fix a quality or safety problem.

"The SSQA involves taking a look at all the processes involved in managing a sheep operation," said Deborah Roeber, Colorado State University. She headed up the "Train-the-Trainers" sessions held in Ft. Collins, Colo.

These trainers will now begin to work directly with producers as the SSQA program rolls out across the country.

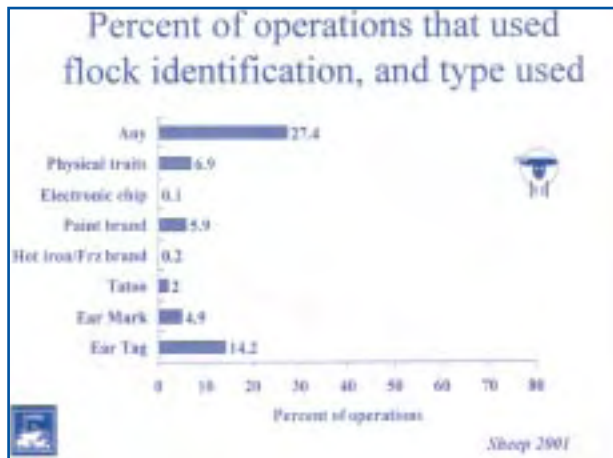
# NAHMS Unveils Sheep 2001 Survey Results

*National survey to help guide future decisions*

The USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) is cranking out reports from its comprehensive Sheep 2001 survey. Sheep producers and industry leaders viewed some of those results at the joint meeting of the American Sheep Industry Association and the National Lamb Feeders Association.

Dr. Katherine Marshall with the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health in Ft. Collins, Colo., presented preliminary information from questions about general management posed to 3,210 sheep producers from 22 of the major sheep-producing states. "There's much more information being processed right now," Dr. Marshall said. "More in-depth information will be coming from our additional field surveys."

The NAHMS Sheep 2001 study is the sheep industry's first "on the farm" study. It was designed to determine such things as prevalence of specific sheep diseases such as Johne's and OPP; to provide a serum bank with which to address future disease issues; and to provide information on trends in sheep health and management. Dr. Marshall reported that more than



21,000 serum samples from ewes 2 years and older were banked as a result of the study.

The study also will provide information on the national distribution of genotypes at codon 171, potentially valuable information for scientists working on the scrapie eradication project.

The study found that only 27.4% of sheep operations use flock identification. The most common ID tool was the eartag, at 14.2%, followed by paint brands at 5.9%. As expected, larger flocks were more likely to use identification than smaller flocks.

Some of the other interesting findings included:

- About 34% of non-feedlot operations quarantine new additions to the flock. Producers were more likely to quarantine replacement ram lambs (41%) than replacement ewe lambs (30%).

- Very few producers test new arrivals for Johne's disease (3.4%) or OPP (6%). Common treat-

ments for new arrivals included deworming, external parasite treatment, and vaccinations.

- Veterinarians were consulted by 46% of operations during 2000. Most common reasons for consulting with a veterinarian were disease diagnosis and prevention. Lambing problems (19%) also were high on the list. "Larger producers were more likely to

consult a veterinarian for disease diagnosis and disease prevention than smaller operations," Dr. Marshall noted.

- Veterinarians were rated the No. 1 "very important source" of information about sheep health. Other producers, shearers, universities and newsletters also were considered important sources.

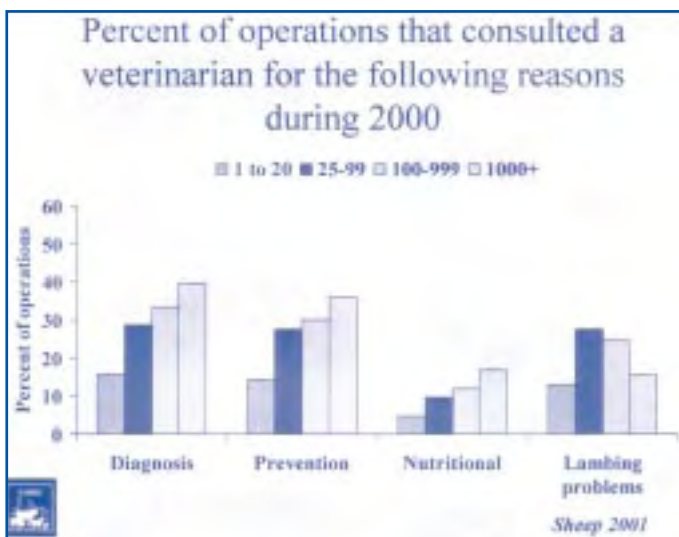
- More than three-fourths of operations handled death loss by burial or leaving the carcass for scavengers.

- Almost 60% of operations reported that they did not disinfect shears between sheep. More than 90% did not shear sheep in order by age. Fewer than 3% sheared in order from youngest to oldest, the least likely way to spread disease.

Full reports on Part I: Reference of Sheep Management in the U.S., 2001, should be available this spring.

Reports on the second part of the study (concerning sheep health) and the third part (sheep feedlot health and management) likely will be available later this year. Fact sheets and interpretive reports will be available on animal movement, Johne's, OPP, and the codon testing results.

For the latest reports, visit [www.aphis.usda.gov/us/ceah/cahm](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/us/ceah/cahm) on the Internet.



# Tough on Scrapie, Gentle on Genetics

*Wyoming scrapie control pilot project offers first step toward eradication*

A Scrapie Control Pilot Project is receiving "good buy-in" from the Wyoming sheep industry. That's according to Dr. Jim Logan, Wyoming state veterinarian. "It's real critical to the success of a program like this to have support from the industry," he said.

Wyoming's plans call for active surveillance targeting flocks at highest risk for the disease. Interested producers are evaluated for participation and if their flock is selected for testing, officials sample blood from up to 100 sheep between the ages of 14 and 36 months for genotype testing.

If those genetic tests indicate susceptibility (QQ alleles at codon 171), officials will perform "third-eyelid" testing to check for the disease. If eyelid testing reveals the

presence of scrapie, the sheep flock would enter the scrapie control pilot program.

"By using such things as the third-eyelid test, we're trying to use the best science available," he said. "We want to make absolutely sure that no other state is adversely affected by what we do in



Wyoming, so we take a conservative approach. But we also want to try to maintain good genetics as best we can without immediately going to depopulation."

The disease-control program provides scientifically sound disease

control policy for flocks containing an animal that tests positive for scrapie and flocks determined to be infected, source, or trace flocks. The program calls for mandatory identification and removal of positive, suspect and genetically susceptible animals through purchase of these animals by USDA for diagnostic testing.

At the owner's request, certain animals considered to be "high-risk" sheep may be exempted from removal based on factors such as genetic susceptibility, gender and live-animal test results.

"We may find that some animals with the Q allele are superior for wool quality or conformation," he said. "We don't want to lose superior genetics."

The state sheep industry would like to see scrapie eliminated, Dr. Logan said, but "it's probably premature to be using a word like eradication right now. Detection and control is probably a more accurate description," he said. "This problem had to be addressed as an industry, and I applaud the sheep industry for stepping up and taking on the job."

## FSIS Vet Force Oversees Humane Issues, Biosecurity

America's newest force of highly trained troops have reported for duty. Their charge is to enforce humane handling and slaughter of livestock, plus biosecurity.

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) reported its 17 District Veterinary Medical Specialists (DVMS) began work Feb. 1. They will be the primary contact in each of FSIS' district offices for humane handling and slaughter issues, and the liaison between the district office and headquarters on humane handling matters.

"FSIS established these new positions because humanely handling and slaughtering animals continues

to be a top priority," said Margaret Glavin, acting FSIS administrator. "These experts will ensure that all plants address their humane handling responsibilities."

Each DVMS will be responsible for on-site coordination of nationally prescribed humane slaughter procedures and verification of humane handling activities, as well as dissemination of directives.

In addition to these duties, the DVMS force will participate in other farm-to-table activities, such as coordinating with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service on foreign animal diseases and working on biosecurity issues.

Each DVMS will also work with new FSIS veterinary hires on humane handling and slaughter regulatory responsibilities, including ante-mortem inspection. They will conduct on-site verifications of humane handling activities and prepare summary reports on their findings. In addition, they will partner with other federal, state, and private sector experts on humane handling issues, foreign animal disease concerns and assist district managers in sharing information on Pathogen Reduction/Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point systems, and residue control programs.

## 2002 NIAA Meeting

# Animal Agriculture: Dealing with New Realities

We are a nation and industry challenged. That's why it's more important than ever to join together and focus on education, information sharing and protection. With the theme, "Animal Agriculture—Dealing with New Realities," this year's National Institute for Animal Agriculture Annual Meeting offers that very opportunity.

The meeting will take place March 24-28 at the Palmer House Hilton in downtown Chicago. NIAA's roots date back to 1916 when the Livestock Sanitary Committee was formed in Chicago. The organization based its operations there for well over half a century.

Much has changed in our industry since 1916, however, maintain-

ing a safe food supply is still dependent on a healthy animal population.

Keynote speakers include U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, who will address agroterrorism and other new realities facing animal agriculture.

For registration information, visit [www.animalagriculture.org](http://www.animalagriculture.org).

## NIAA Meeting Schedule of Events

### Sunday March 24

8-9 a.m. Devotional/Worship Service  
9 a.m. - 6 p.m. National John's Working Group  
6-9 p.m. NIAA Executive Committee Dinner and Meeting

### Monday March 25

7-11 a.m. National Milk Producers Federation Meeting  
7-11 a.m. National Assembly of Chief Animal Health Officials  
9-10:30 a.m. NIAA Board of Directors Briefing  
11 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Membership Meeting and Luncheon

1-5 p.m. **Opening General Session**

6-7:30 p.m. Welcome Reception

### Tuesday March 26

6:30-8 a.m. National PRV Control Board Meeting

8-11:45 a.m. **Section I**  
Committee Seminars/Meetings:

*Cattle Health*  
*Equine Health*  
*Poultry Health*  
*Sheep Health*  
*Swine Health*

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Lunch Break

1:15 - 5 p.m. **Section II**  
Committee Seminars/Meetings:

*Animal ID & Information Systems*  
*Brucellosis Eradication Task Force*  
*Emerging Diseases*  
*Youth Programs*

5-6 p.m. Board Meeting  
Committee Reports & Resolutions

6-7 p.m. Reception

7-9 p.m. **Recognition Banquet**  
*Entertainment: Mac Anderson*

### Wednesday March 27

8-11:45 a.m. **Section III**

Committee Seminars/Meetings:  
*Animal Health Emergency Mgmt.*  
*Animal Production Food Safety*  
*Pseudorabies Eradication Task Force*

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Lunch Break

1:15-5 p.m. **Section IV**  
Committee Seminars/Meetings:

*Animal Care*  
*Animal Health & International Trade*  
*Environmental Issues*

5-6 p.m. Board Meeting  
Committee Reports & Resolutions

### Thursday March 28

8 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
NIAA Board of Directors Meeting

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
National Animal Health Emergency Management Steering Committee

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