

Sheep & Goat HEALTH REPORT

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Summer 2005

ASI Submits ID Comments

The American Sheep Industry Association has provided comments for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Animal Identification System (NAIS), voicing its position on best implementing an effective system for sheep producers. The remarks followed suit with ASI's policy on animal identification, set forth by the ASI board of directors, which endorses the concept of a mandatory identification program for livestock.

According to the comments, "the sheep industry is committed to enhanced disease prevention, control and surveillance, which will be accomplished through modern animal identification and tracking systems. Animal identification has been a key component of the

national accelerated scrapie eradication program since it began approximately three years ago."

Due to the implementation of the scrapie program, the sheep industry has an animal identification system in place today that largely accomplishes the goals, key components and guiding principles stated in the NAIS Draft Strategic Plan.

In the process of implementing the scrapie program, many lessons were learned regarding ear tag use, size, placement, retention and environmental effects, multi-functionality readability and distribution. The current system is basically a visual-based tracking system; however, the industry is very interested in pursuing the discovery and testing of a more automated, accurate and high-throughput identification system.

To date, there are no such proven systems available for sheep. For the foreseeable future, 48-hour traceability can be best accomplished for breeding sheep by using the current scrapie identification system. It is recommended that market animals not currently covered in the scrapie program can be traced with the addition of the group/lot identification. Ear tags for the scrapie program would continue to have the scrapie flock number printed on them and would be linked to the NAIS number in the central database.

Realistically, some species will be able to achieve compliance quicker than others. The sheep

industry believes it is appropriate to set reasonable goals for implementing NAIS for each species and work toward industry-wide implementation for a uniform compliance date that is recognized as being achievable and reasonable by each industry.

The complete ASI comments can be viewed on the Internet at www.sheepusa.org. All comments made on the strategic plan are available at www.usda.gov/nais. ●
From Sheep Industry News, August 2005

USDA to Change NAIS Direction

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced on Aug. 30 the Department of Agriculture's guiding principles for development of a public/private partnership that enables the private sector to maintain animal movement data as part of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

"We are gratified by the growing support for an animal identification system, with over 100,000 premises now registered," Secretary Johanns said. "We are eager to work closely with industry as they develop and maintain databases that contain animal movement information. After hearing the confidentiality concerns of producers, we envision a system that

See NAIS Direction | page 3

Inside This Issue...

PAGE 2
Scrapie Cost Share Program Helping Producers

PAGE 3
Food Supply Veterinarian Demand to Increase

PAGE 4-5
Planning Herd Health Programs for Goats

PAGE 6-7
News Briefs

PAGE 8
Federal Agencies Establish Agroterrorism Partnership with States, Industry

Scrapie Cost-Share Program Helping Producers

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) is cooperating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to help sheep producers, who are interested, have their rams genotyped for scrapie susceptibility/resistance. Producers in states that do not have State-APHIS cooperative ram genotyping programs had until Sept. 15, 2005, or when the funds are exhausted (whichever comes first), to test up to 10 of their rams and be eligible for a cost-share reimbursement.

States that are eligible to partic-

ipate in the ASI-APHIS cooperative program include: Alaska, Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Missouri, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia and Vermont. Producers in states not listed above should contact their state veterinarian regarding participation in their State-APHIS program.

Participation is easy; producers will need to have an accredited veterinarian collect blood samples from their rams. The veterinarian will then send the samples to an APHIS-approved laboratory along with a properly completed "APHIS VS Form 5-29." Producers can choose to have their samples sent to any APHIS-approved lab. A list of approved labs can be located on

the ASI Homepage at: www.sheepusa.org or by calling the office.

An original form (not a photocopy) must be completely and accurately filled-out to receive a reimbursement. Original forms are issued to accredited veterinarians by APHIS and have several colored carbon pages and a unique serial number in the upper-right corner. This form must be signed by your veterinarian. Send just one of the carbon copies of the "APHIS VS Form 5-29" to ASI (9785 Maroon Circle, Suite 360; Englewood, Colo. 80112) with a note requesting a cost-share return. ASI will, in turn, send a check for \$12.00 per ram tested to the producer to help offset the cost of the test.

"The eradication of scrapie in this country is a primary goal for the sheep industry," states Paul Rodgers, deputy director of animal health for ASI. ●



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BSE Investigation Yields Negatives, One Positive

Of the more than 432,678 (as of Aug. 8) samples tested for BSE, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has found only one case, announced earlier this summer. The June 24 announcement of the U.S.' first BSE-positive sample from Texas has made little waves in terms of the cattle markets, indicating the confidence of the safety of U.S. beef. Sixty-seven of the positive animal's cohorts were tested, according to USDA, with all tests returning negative. Clifford added that finding multiple cases in a herd is uncommon.

A July 27 announcement of a "non-definitive" bovine spongiform

encephalopathy (BSE) test result has returned negative following further testing at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency in Weybridge, England.

"NVSL and Weybridge conducted the additional testing after a non-definitive IHC test result was received last week," said Dr. John Clifford, deputy administrator for USDA's Veterinary Services, on Aug. 3. "The initial non-definitive result was caused by artifactual (artificial or untrue) staining and, while this staining did not resemble BSE, we felt the prudent course was to conduct the additional tests." ●

NAIS Direction | USDA opens door for private database

(continued from page 1)

allows these databases to feed a single, privately held animal-tracking repository that we can access."

USDA's four guiding principles for the NAIS are as follows:

- The system must be able to allow tracking of animals from point of origin to processing within 48 hours without unnecessary burden to producers and other stakeholders.
- The system's architecture must be developed without unduly increasing the size and role of government.
- The system must be flexible enough to utilize existing technologies and incorporate new identification technologies as they are developed.
- Animal movement data should be maintained in a private system that can be readily accessed when necessary by state and federal animal health authorities.

The announcement has brought some favorable reactions, drawing support from congressmen such as Bob Goodlatte and Robin Hayes, as well as applause from NCBA and NPPC.

USDA solicited public input on NAIS through a variety of means including the formation of a special subcommittee under the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases, a series of listening sessions across the country in 2004, and a thinking paper published for public comment in May 2005. Public response indicates there is widespread support for a system to rapidly trace potentially exposed animals in the event of an animal disease outbreak. Many producers who responded also favored a system that allows the animal movement data to be privately held.

USDA officials have scheduled a

stakeholder meeting this on Oct. 12 in Kansas City to clarify expectations for the private tracking system and discuss user requirements and system specifications.

Once fully implemented, NAIS will enhance U.S. efforts to respond to intentionally or unintentionally introduced animal disease outbreaks more quickly and effectively. More information about NAIS is available at www.usda.gov/nais. ●

ID•INFO

EXPO 2005

Look for coverage of ID/INFO EXPO 2005 in the next issue of Sheep & Goat Health Report, including the latest on the move to a private database and how this may affect the sheep and goat industries.

Food Supply Veterinarian Demand to Increase

Preliminary results of a broad scale study evaluating the demand for food animal veterinarians in the U.S. have indicated that demand will increase in the future, according to a report in the American Veterinary Medical Association's *Convention Daily News*. The preliminary results were presented at the AVMA annual convention in July.

Dr. David Andrus, Dr. Bruce Prince and Dr. Kevin Gwinner, all from Kansas State University presented the results to convention attendees. Kansas State University was charged in June of 2004 to embark on the \$300,000 study by the Food Supply Veterinary Medicine Coalition with support from Bayer Animal Health.

Five key factors were identified as the cause for an increase in demand:

- Heightened public concern about the food supply;
- Zoonotic disease-related concerns;
- The threat of bioterrorism;
- The increasing need to track animals entering the food chain; and
- Requiring third-party certification and verification standards.

Factors that would contribute to a decrease include budgetary restraints and client concerns about veterinary service costs, according to the researchers.

The study evaluated the veterinary profession in both the U.S. and Canada. The survey involved students as well as representatives of private practice, government, industry and academia.

According to the report, investigators concluded that demand in the areas of swine, dairy, beef and poultry production, as well as animal health surveillance, academia, state government and federal public health will increase over the short (2007) and long term (2007-2010). Demand is expected to increase up to 10 to 12 percent in some areas.

The FSVMC members include the Academy of Veterinary Consultants, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners, American Association of Swine Veterinarians, American Veterinary Medical Association and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges.

Planning Herd Health Programs for Goats

The increasing trend in goat production, both dairy and meat, has become prevalent in the U.S. Regardless of size, managing goats properly is crucial, particularly when discussing herd health.

Joan Dean Rowe, DVM, MPVM, PhD, DACVPM, with the University of California-Davis, is a highly recognized expert in small ruminant health and epidemiology. Recently, she presented at the American Veterinary Medical Association on the topic of herd health programs for dairy and meat goats, highlighting the key areas for veterinarians in preventative herd management.

"Veterinarians often become involved in setting up goat herd health programs as a result of crisis intervention for a specific disease outbreak problem," Rowe said. "Once the initial crisis is under control, the opportunities to improve health management involving nutrition, reproduction, infectious disease control, parasite management, kid rearing, post-weaning growth, buck health, etc. can be identified and prioritized according to the herd owners' goals and constraints."

In her presentation, Rowe identified control points for disease management in goat herds. They include:

- Individual goat identification and records for herd management
- Records systems and health management plans
- Nutrition
- Routine vaccination programs
- Reproductive Health Management
- Infectious disease control programs
- Management/prevention of self-limiting infectious diseases
- Parasite prevention and control

- Milk quality and udder health
- Milk & meat quality assurance
- Ongoing disease surveillance

Each of these components is important in a herd health program, with each playing a specific role in the overall health of the herd.

Identification is a popular topic throughout the livestock industry,



particularly with increasing producer awareness of the Scrapie Eradication Program and the National Animal Identification System. Rowe points out that having animal identification is a necessary basis for record-keeping and monitoring reproduction and health status. Management decisions in a variety of areas, such as breeding, culling and disease treatment are all based on identification in the record system.

Health management plans, based on an effective records system, are important for producers to understand. The records system can be as simple as a log book, or as detailed as some computer software programs will allow. Regardless, the information within these provide the basis for producers and veterinarians to follow for herd health management decisions.

"Veterinarians can play a vital role in health management," Rowe said, "formulating routine procedure protocols and treatment pro-

ocols for common diseases."

Rowe added that records are important in meat and milk quality aspects, such as withdrawal times.

Goat health is dependent upon ration formulation of feed as well, according to Rowe. She points out that deficiencies in copper or selenium can present disease problems, or increase incidence of endemic diseases within a herd. A veterinarian can play an important role in identifying what nutritional factors may be impacting health, including feeding practices.

"The veterinarian should evaluate feeding facilities and methods," said Rowe. "Feed bunk management that favors fecal contamination of forages or supplements can promote transmission of diseases such as coccidiosis."

Water management is also important, both for milking females for increased production as well as bucks and wethers for prevention of urinary calculi. A number of factors can impact water quality, according to Rowe, and producers should implement strategies that promote a clean, fresh water source constantly.

Rowe touched on routine vaccination programs, noting that each herd has different needs in terms of regular vaccinations, depending on risks of diseases. She again highlighted the importance of accurate records of disease in a herd, which can be applied to vaccination needs.

In regards to infectious disease control programs, Rowe talked about the importance of kid-rearing strategies to prevent disease, as many such diseases are acquired in neonatal stages. Pasteurized rearing strategies are fairly common in prevention of mycoplasmosis,

caprine arthritis-encephalitis virus, Johne's disease and caseous lymphadenitis. Milking hygiene and serological testing also provide important tools in the prevention and management of infectious disease.

Other diseases may have adverse impacts on marketing and movement of animals as well, according to Rowe. Soremouth, pinkeye and ringworm are contagious diseases that can be costly in treatment, as well as caus-



ing losses of sale premiums and the ability to participate in shows. Zoonotic concerns are also a factor for caretakers with these diseases. Managing these diseases properly can help protect health of other herds.

Rowe points out managing coccidiosis through parasite control and prevention as an important factor in maintaining growth rates and general health of goat herds. Coccidiostats, such as decoquinatate, lasalosisid, rumensin or amprolim, can be effective prevention methods in kids for the disease, while sulfadimethoxine can treat coccidiosis if detected in a timely manner. Internal parasites can affect a number of herds depen-

dant on geography and climate. The use of the FAMACHA method (see Sheep & Goat Health Report, Spring 2005) is increasing. Rowe pointed out that ongoing surveillance through fecal egg counts or necropsy is still a very practical management tool.

Quality assurance for meat and milk is an important challenge to manage, according to Rowe, particularly in addressing both meat and milk residue issues. Extralabel use of many drugs is needed in goats, thus adhering to such guidelines is highly important. Rowe cited the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database (FARAD) as an integral part of planning for residue avoidance. And of course, record keeping along with a consulting veterinarian can be beneficial. Rowe also encourages judicious oversight of drug use in any goat herd.

Ongoing disease surveillance is paramount to any herd health management program. "Planned routine necropsy of selective herd culls as well as deaths or abortions, will allow monitoring of the major disease contributors to the herd," said Rowe. ●

Milk Quality, Udder Health

Rowe says that most of the principles used in dairy cattle apply to dairy goats in regards to milking sanitation. She offers a few resources for producers that can provide information beneficial to producers.

- National Mastitis Council
www.nmconline.org
- Dairy Practices Council
www.dairyprc.org

"Clinical mastitis can result in death and early culling because of failure to produce quality milk or raise kids, and decreased production," says Rowe. She points out some key practices that can be used in maintaining milk quality and udder health:

- Ongoing surveillance of milk cultures, either in the bulk tank or milk filters
- Post-milking teat dipping
- Single-use paper towels
- Testing, segregation and culling of animals for long-term control.

ADGA Meeting to Feature AASRP Program

The American Dairy Goat Association's (ADGA) annual meeting, scheduled for Oct. 15 to 21 in Kansas City with feature a two-day program for the American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners (AASRP). The program will be held on Sunday, Oct. 16 and Monday, Oct. 17.

The AASRP program will feature a variety of topics, including:

- Caseous Lymphadenitis, Periparturient Doe and Neonate;
- Parasites, Resistance, FAMACHA and a panel discussion;

- Assisted Reproduction and Mastitis; and
- Scrapie, Genetic Resistance, National Animal Identification and the DNA Typing Program.

The meeting will be held at the Kansas City Airport Hilton. More information can be found on the Internet at www.adga.org, or by calling (828) 286-3801. Registration for the annual meeting is still available online. Please visit the web site to view the registration packages offered by ADGA. ●

News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs

Poll Shows NAIS Could Boost Consumer Confidence

A recent poll shows that consumers will become even more confident in the safety and security of the nation's meat and poultry supply if a mandatory National Animal Identification System (NAIS) is implemented. Under the NAIS, authorities would be able to quickly locate specific animals to prevent the spread of livestock diseases, such as mad cow disease. The consumer survey was sponsored by Global Animal Management Inc. (GAM), a wholly owned subsidiary of Schering-Plough Animal Health Corporation.

According to the survey of 1,000 U.S. consumers, if NAIS were to be implemented, average consumer confidence in meat safety and security would jump to from 6.5 to 7.4 on a 10-point scale. Nearly 55 percent of those polled said their confidence would then be high (8-10), and those who said their confidence will remain low (1-3) declined from 10 percent to less than 4 percent.

Congress Considers Veterinary Workforce Expansion

Working to address the need for well-trained first responders for agroterrorism in the U.S., U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) introduced the Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act in the Senate in early May. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), together with the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, is urging Congress to protect the health of animals, that of the American pub-

lic, and the safety of the U.S. food supply by passing and funding this legislation.

The federal government has not allocated general funding for veterinary medical education in nearly 30 years, which threatens not only the national economy but also the lives of U. S. citizens.

"Highly contagious avian influenza, foot and mouth disease and mad cow disease are all naturally occurring threats that have the potential to severely impact animal health and welfare, food safety, and public health, and devastate the United States economy. As first responders, veterinarians are critical to preventing, diagnosing, and controlling biological agents that can be transmitted between animals and human beings," said AVMA President, Bonnie Beaver, DVM, MS.

The bill, S. 914 resides in the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee.

Russell is First American Elected WVA President

Dr. Leon H. Russell Jr. on Tuesday became the first American elected president of the World Veterinary Association.

For the next three years, Dr. Russell, whose candidacy was endorsed by the AVMA, will head the world's oldest international professional organization comprising nearly a hundred member countries.

"I'm very honored and humbled by your vote," Dr. Russell told members of the WVA Presidents' Assembly who elected him. "I will be president to everyone, and I will hear you when you speak." Dr. Johnson S. M. Chiang of Taiwan and Dr. Faouzi Kechrid of

Tunisia were elected as the association's two vice presidents. The Presidents' Assembly was convened in Minneapolis for the 28th World Veterinary Congress, which last met in the United States in 1934.

The WVA works closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), World Health Organization, and similar organizations on matters of food safety, food security, antimicrobial resistance, animal welfare, and zoonotic diseases.

Dr. Russell of College Station, Texas, is a professor at Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine. He also has a PhD in veterinary microbiology, as well as a master's in public health.

The former AVMA president was elected one of two WVA vice presidents in 2002 at the WVC in Tunis, Tunisia. Dr. Russell had previously been a councilor for the North American continent representing the United States in the association.

From AVMA Convention Daily News, July 20, 2005.

Crawford Appointed FDA Commissioner

The Senate has confirmed Dr. Lester Crawford to serve as head of the Food and Drug Administration. He has previously served as acting commissioner. Crawford was confirmed by the Senate to be FDA Commissioner on July 18, 2005, by a majority of 78 to 16.

Crawford, who received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Auburn University and a Ph.D. in pharmacology from the University

News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs

of Georgia, filled the role of Department of Physiology-Pharmacology at the University of Georgia Chair prior to working for FDA. He has also served as Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA).

"The appointment of Dr. Crawford, a recognized authority in veterinary medicine, to the position of commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration underscores the important link between public health and animal health," said AVMA President Henry E. Childers. "The American Veterinary Medical Association is extremely proud of our colleague and commends President Bush and Congress for recognizing the invaluable contribution veterinary medicine makes, and will continue to make, to public health and safety."

Reports Call for High-Level Coordination of Animal Health

The United States needs a new high-level mechanism to coordinate the currently fragmented framework for confronting new and emerging animal-borne diseases, such as mad cow disease, avian influenza, and West Nile virus, says a new report from the National Academies' National Research Council. Also, a second Research Council report recently released says stronger efforts are needed to recruit more veterinarians and other scientists into veterinary research. Both reports note that a growing shortage in the number of veterinary pathologists, lab animal scientists, and other veterinary researchers – especially those involved in public health – is making it more difficult to meet mounting challenges in animal health.

The recently confirmed case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in June 2005 illustrated the potential economic impact of disease outbreaks, as some countries closed their markets to U.S. beef and beef products. Emerging diseases and the possibility of bioterrorism targeted at the food supply are among the evolving threats that challenge the U.S. animal health framework.

Currently, dozens of federal and state agencies, university laboratories, and private companies monitor and maintain animal health in this country. Many of the government agencies perform similar functions, while gaps in responsibility also exist, particularly in federal oversight of nonlivestock animal diseases. *Animal Health at the Crossroads: Preventing, Detecting, and Diagnosing Animal Diseases* says centralized coordination is needed to harmonize the work of public and private groups that safeguard animal health. The coordinating mechanism should facilitate the sharing of information among agencies and connect key databases, as well as improve communication with the public, especially during animal disease outbreaks.

Plum Island Facility to be Replaced

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is leading a requirements analysis process to identify a next-generation biological and agricultural defense facility to replace the important but aging facility at Plum Island, New York. The Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC) is an essential component of the national strategy for protecting U.S. agriculture from a bioterrorist attack

involving the intentional introduction of foreign animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, as described in the Homeland Security Presidential Directive, "Biodefense for the 21st Century."

The Plum Island facility was built in the 1950s and is nearing the end of its lifecycle, and the Homeland Security mission requires replacing PIADC with a new facility. The President's FY06 budget requests \$23 million for the needs assessment and design process for a new National Bio and Agro-defense Facility (NBAF). In addition to agricultural and animal studies, public health threats from emerging high consequence zoonotic pathogens and the development and licensure of medical countermeasures are generating additional demands for biocontainment laboratory space. DHS is working closely with the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to evaluate future needs in the context of this new national facility.

"Healthy Wildlife" is Focus of USAHA Annual Meeting

"Healthy North American Wildlife Initiative" is the focus of a joint Scientific Session of the 109th Annual Meeting of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the 48th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) at the Hershey Lodge and Conference Center, Nov. 3-9, in Hershey, Pa. More information can be found at www.usaha.org. ●

Federal Agencies Establish Agroterrorism Partnership with States, Industry

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have announced a new collaboration with states and private industry to protect the nation's food supply from terrorist threats.

"Ensuring the safety of our nation's food supply is a top priority for President Bush and USDA," said Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns. "This partnership demonstrates our commitment as government and the private sector work together to protect our agricultural commodities from terrorism. We look forward to working with our partners."

The Strategic Partnership Program Agroterrorism (SPPA) Initiative supports President Bush's requirements directing the government to work closely with states and industry to secure the nation's food supply. Announced today at the Food and Agriculture Sector Coordinating Council meeting, four pilot visits will be conducted in September and October. The purpose of these visits is to assess and identify vulnerabilities in the agriculture and food sectors.

"As one of the lead federal agencies charged with protecting our nation's food supply, the FDA fully supports this initiative encouraging a closer working relationship with our partners in federal and state government, as well as the private sector to make the nation's food even safer," said FDA Commissioner Dr. Lester Crawford. "This partnership brings together all of the organizations that have the best knowledge and abilities in safeguarding the food we eat starting from the farm all the way to our kitchen tables."

Over the next year, teams of federal and state officials will travel to all 50 states to meet with all sectors of the food chain. Together, the federal, state and private industry partners will discuss security issues from farm-to-table and consider ways to better protect our food supply.

"We are pleased to participate

in this important initiative to enhance the overall security of our nation's food and agricultural infrastructure," said Robert Stephan, Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Protection, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "The health of our citizens and our economy depend on our ability to conduct assessments, validate field information and provide guidance that can be shared with our federal, state and local, tribal as well as private sector partners."

These visits will help the federal partners better consider how states and industry can protect the food supply, gain more information about the food industry's protection needs and assist government and private industry in refining its efforts including research and development goals.

This effort is the second major joint initiative for the federal partners. In May 2005, FBI, with the support of DHS, USDA and FDA hosted the first ever International Symposium for Agrosecurity in Kansas City, Mo.

Additional information about agrosecurity can be found on USDA's Web site at www.usda.gov/homelandsecurity; the FDA Web site at www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/bioterrorism.html; and the DHS Web site at www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=43&content=3802. ●

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