

# Swine HEALTH REPORT

A National Institute for Animal Agriculture Publication

Winter 2004

## Secretary Announces Administration Proposal for Full Funding of Ames Animal Health Complex at Construction Launch Ceremony

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman has announced that President Bush will include \$178 million in the FY 2005 budget to complete the renovation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's new National Centers for Animal Health.

"When completed, the center will become the most modern and best-equipped animal disease research facility in the world," Veneman said during remarks at the official groundbreaking ceremony for the complex on Jan. 13. "The work that is done here is a crucial link to the overall effort to protect animal agriculture."

The Ames complex is USDA's "flagship laboratory" for large animal research and diagnosis. It includes the National Animal Disease Center, operated by USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS),

and the National Veterinary Services Laboratory and the Center for Veterinary Biologics, both operated by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. (APHIS).

"The request of \$178 million by the President would represent the final installment of the \$460 million needed to fully renovate these facilities," Veneman said. "If approved by Congress, these funds will permit us to fully complete this project by the end of 2007. We intend to use accelerated contract procedures and construction techniques to meet this schedule."

Veneman said the facility is more important than ever before in the context of recent animal disease threats. For instance, the National Veterinary Services Laboratory conducted the initial tests to confirm

the case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, from a single cow in Washington state.

"Even though the ultimate confirmation was made in England, we had the confidence in our own experts at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in order to make an immediate announcement and respond quickly," Veneman said.

National Institute for Animal Agriculture Chairman of the Board Kenneth E. Olson represented industry stakeholders at the groundbreaking ceremony. "It is truly a great day for animal agriculture and I offer our congratulations to USDA for reaching this milestone," he said in his remarks.

Olson said industry stakeholders have long been impressed with

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Officials break ground at new National Centers for Animal Health in Ames, Iowa on Jan. 13. Pictured left to right: Dr. Kenneth Olson, Chairman of the Board of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture, U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman, U.S. Congressman Tom Latham, and Dr. Joseph Jen, USDA Undersecretary for Research, Education and Economics. Photo courtesy of USDA.

# Pork Industry Working Group Weighing in on National Animal Identification Plan Development

With the recent discovery of a cow with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Washington state demonstrating the importance of a rapid animal disease response system, pork producers are being encouraged to provide input on a draft animal identification plan for U.S. agriculture.

Representing the interests of U.S. pork producers, the National Pork Board has been an active

member of a national animal identification development team responsible for the development of the draft U.S. Animal Identification Plan (USAIP). The USAIP focuses on enhancing the nation's capability to locate and trace individual animals and/or groups of animals within 48 hours should an animal health emergency arise.

"The issue of animal identification is something all pork producers and allied partners need to understand," said Dr. Mark Engle, director of swine health for the National Pork Board, who serves on the National ID Steering Committee and chairs the committee's Pork Industry Working Group.

"Although pork producers were critical to the development of the USAIP, we are soliciting further input," said Engle, who encourages producers to go to [www.usaip.info](http://www.usaip.info) on the Internet to review the document. "Hopefully, producers will review the swine sections in the USAIP and express any concerns. We want to implement something practical and effective."

The plan proposes an initial implementation of premises identification. This provides for each location housing pigs to have a unique number within a standardized system. The pork industry already uses group/lot ID and individual ID. However, these current identification systems can be enhanced by establishing a standardized national premises identification system. A national identification system would provide for the opportunity to more effectively address foreign and domestic ani-

mal health threats.

"We have had mandatory identification regulations for swine in interstate commerce since 1988," said Engle. "Therefore, we are simply looking at means to enhance an already effective system. We clearly understand the areas that need improvement and will work to finalize a plan that is not only efficient and effective, but also producer friendly."

The USAIP has involved more than 100 animal industry and state/federal government professionals from more than 70 allied associations/organizations, including the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The plan's core purpose is using animal identification to improve protection of animal agriculture by safeguarding animal health, ultimately promoting human health; providing wholesome, reliable, secure food resources; mitigating national economic threats and enhancing a sustainable environment.

"Pork producers have long been dedicated to the health and well-being of their animals," said Engle, who also serves as chair of NIAA's Animal Identification and Information Systems Committee. "This plan is becoming a reality and will promote an even higher level of confidence for safeguarding animal health and food security."

*Producers who would like to provide comments on USAIP to the Pork Industry Working Group may do so via Email to [mark.engle@porkboard.org](mailto:mark.engle@porkboard.org).*



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# NIAA Supports Veneman's Call for Immediate Implementation of National Animal ID System

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA), a long-time advocate of a coordinated, national system for animal identification in the United States, is urging congressional leaders to support Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman's call for immediate implementation of a national tracking system for animals.

On Dec. 30, 2003, Secretary Veneman announced that USDA would begin immediate implementation of a national animal identification system. "USDA has worked with partners at the federal and state levels and in industry for the past year and a half on the adoption of standards for a verifiable nationwide animal identification system to help enhance the speed and accuracy of our response to disease outbreaks across many different animal species," Veneman said. "I have asked USDA's Chief Information Officer to expedite the development of the technology architecture to implement this system a top priority."

The Secretary's comments on animal ID prefaced her announcement of additional safeguards to bolster the U.S. protection systems against bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

In a letter mailed to Congressional leaders from NIAA Chairman of the Board Dr. Kenneth E. Olson and NIAA President and Chief Executive Officer Glenn N. Slack, it was stated that NIAA:

- Believes a national system for animal identification will enhance protection of our nation's agriculture industry and its contribution to the U.S. economy against the ever-present threat of agroterrorism as well as unintentional foreign animal disease incursions.
- Endorses the U.S. Animal Identifi-

fication Plan ([www.usaip.info](http://www.usaip.info)) as the foundation for USDA and Congress to work with the animal agriculture industry in development and implementation.

Olson said USAIP was developed in 2003 by a USDA-led National Identification Development Team consisting of industry representatives and state and federal government officials. "The plan is built around the objective of



Dr. Ken Olson



Glenn Slack

being able to trace the origin of any animal within 48 hours," he said.

- Supports Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman's call for immediate implementation of a national animal identification and tracking system in the United States.

Slack said USAIP already sets an aggressive timetable for implementation – some components of the plan would be implemented beginning in July of this year – "but, the Secretary's call for immediacy could help remove bureaucratic hurdles and barriers that typically exist when implementing a new program."

- Recommends public financing by the federal government to subsidize a national animal ID and tracking system that will work to protect public health and allow the U.S. to remain competitive in international markets.

"How to fund a national system for animal identification in the United States is a question that has not been fully resolved," said Slack.

"The federal government currently requires identification for a number of regulatory programs. The coordination and consolidation of these programs may provide some funding that is already budgeted." However, Slack says some estimates have suggested that the USAIP will require approximately \$100 million annually to maintain.

"Clearly, the need for traceability of food animals has been punctuated by the recent diagnosis of BSE in the United States," said Slack. "The Secretary's call for immediate implementation is out of concern for consumer protection. NIAA believes that public financing is appropriate to provide tracking of animals and animal products."

"The lack of adequate federal funding will likely continue to impede implementation," he said. "Adequate funding, on the other hand, would allow acceleration of the USAIP timeline."

- Urges Congress to take action to maintain producer confidentiality and render the information collected through a national tracking system FOIA exempt.

"It is imperative to achieve full cooperation of animal owners," said Olson, "and that will require that USDA or Congress address producer concerns that USAIP or any other animal tracking system ensure a degree of confidentiality of production records and exemption from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Olson and Slack hope that Congress will embrace USAIP, but acknowledge that certain lawmakers have introduced – with others likely to do so in the coming days – a barrage of legislation concerning animal tracking in the wake of the BSE diagnosis that occurred over the Congressional holiday recess.

## Secretary Announces ...

(continued from page 1)

the work being done by USDA laboratory personnel at Ames, but held concerns about the conditions of the facilities there. He said the Secretary's announcement that proposed full funding to accelerate construction was "great news."

"It has been a long time coming, but we are very pleased to be at the stage of groundbreaking for this facility," said Olson, noting the importance of protecting the health of U.S. livestock. "We appreciate the way that USDA, through ARS and APHIS in particular, has worked with industry to make this a reality."

When completed, Veneman said the National Centers for Animal Health would include almost one million square feet of thoroughly modern facilities that will be biosafe, energy-efficient and will provide state-of-the-art capabilities for research and diagnosis. It will house in a single location a critical mass of scientists who are at the top of their fields with programs across animal disease research, diagnostics and biologics making USDA better able to respond to foreign animal diseases and bioterrorism.

Olson took the opportunity in his remarks, with Veneman, Harkin and other officials listening on, to say that more needs to be done in the U.S. to improve the nation's animal disease diagnostic capabilities, beyond the Ames Center. "We look forward to continuing to partner with you to see the construction here completed and also to move forward other needed parts of the system including the national laboratory network and needed upgrades at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center."

## BSE Diagnosed in Washington State

An investigation into the first known case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the United States has come to a close, but possible changes in surveillance efforts and feeding practices are still being explored by federal officials.

On Dec. 23, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) confirmed that the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa, diagnosed a presumptive positive case of BSE in an adult Holstein cow located in the state of Washington. Subsequent confirmation from the World Reference Laboratory in England was received on Christmas Day.

Infected tissues from the cow were rendered, with only skeletal muscle meat products – deemed safe for human consumption – entering the food chain. USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service issued a Class II recall of the meat "out of an abundance of caution."

National Pork Producers Council President Jon Caspers said the BSE diagnosis "has no connection with the U.S. pork industry because there have been no reported cases of BSE in pigs, nor have there been any reported cases of inter-species transfer between cattle and pigs."

Nearly three-dozen countries imposed restrictions on U.S. cattle, beef and beef products following the discovery, adversely impacting the U.S. beef export market. Live cattle prices traded down the limit for over a week before rebounding to near record high levels enjoyed prior to the Dec. 23 announcement. U.S. consumption of beef was not deterred, largely due to USDA's progressive actions in keeping the media and public at-large informed.

"The constant assurances that

were communicated in daily briefings by U.S. Chief Veterinary Officer Ron DeHaven were delivered in a credible, effective manner, said NIAA President and Chief Executive Officer Glenn N. Slack. "His contributions in maintaining public confidence in the early days of this investigation cannot be underestimated."

Epidemiological tracing and DNA evidence concluded that the index cow was born on a dairy farm in Clamar, Alberta, Canada on April 9, 1997. An investigation to find additional animals from the source herd led to a total of 189 investigations. All premises involved have since been released from a federal hold order.

A total of 255 "animals of interest", defined as animals that were or could have been from the source herd, were identified on 10 premises in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. These animals were depopulated and BSE testing was negative on all 255 head.

Included in the 255 animals of interest were 28 head positively identified back to a group of 81 cattle that entered the U.S. with the index cow, as well as seven heifers out of a group of 17 which were also known to be from the source herd – some, but not all of which, entered the U.S.

"We feel confident that the remaining animals represent very little risk," said DeHaven. "Even in countries like the United Kingdom where the prevalence of BSE has been very high, it is uncommon to find more than one or maybe two positive animals within a herd."

A chronology of events and other detailed information on the BSE investigation is available on the Internet at [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

## e-Health Certificates Receiving Good Reviews

Animal health officials in the six states participating in a pilot program testing web-based certificates of veterinary inspection (CVI) appear to be embracing the new technology.

"Most veterinarians and technicians are happy with the system," said Dr. Carol Woodlief, a veterinarian with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. "There is no software to buy and users can log in from any computer with Internet access and a printer."

Wisconsin state veterinarian Dr. Robert Ehlenfeldt says it cuts down on the time veterinarians spend ordering forms and mailing them and it saves the state the time and money now spent mailing blank certificates out to veterinarians.

"This system could move us light-years ahead of where we are today in tracing animal movements," said Ehlenfeldt. "It still depends on good and accurate record-keeping by veterinarians, and there will be a learning curve. We won't eliminate paper CVIs."

North Carolina State Veterinarian Dr. David Marshall said that under the current paper system, an animal or herd could be in the state for several days or even a week or more before his office receives the paperwork. "With this new database, the electronic health certificates are received just moments after they are submitted.

Both Marshall and Ehlenfeldt agree that the biggest advantage is having the information stored in a searchable database, allowing the

tracing of animals involved in a disease outbreak easier and faster.

"That may not matter so much with tuberculosis or other slow-moving diseases," said Ehlenfeldt. "But with foot-and-mouth disease, which just gallops through herds, it could mean the difference between a livestock industry left with its legs cut out from under it and one that's limping but will recover."

The pilot program is a cooperative effort between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the states. USDA has been working with Communications Resource, Inc. and GlobalVetLink, LC, to develop the software. The other states involved in the pilot project are Florida, Texas, California and Colorado.

## Dr. Paul Sundberg to Head Pork Board's Science and Technology Division



Dr. Paul Sundberg has been named vice president of science and technology for the National Pork Board, replacing

Dr. Beth Lautner, who became director of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in January.

Sundberg has overseen technical input for Pork Checkoff-funded programs including the Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Program and the Swine Welfare Assurance Program (SWAP). He also has worked extensively on a variety of pork-industry issues, including antimicrobial resistance and the judicious use of animal health

products; swine-health regulations; food safety and pork production.

"We are fortunate to have someone with Paul Sundberg's knowledge, passion and skills in place to continue to oversee the vital scientific work being conducted for pork producers with their Checkoff investment," said Steven Murphy, chief executive officer of the National Pork Board.

Sundberg earned his bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He completed his veterinary medicine curriculum and master's degree in clinical science/preventive medicine at Iowa State University. He is board certified in the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine and is serving

as the president of the college. He also has a doctorate degree in veterinary microbiology with a specialty in preventive medicine from Iowa State University.

Prior to becoming part of the National Pork Board staff on July 1, 2001, Sundberg was assistant vice president of science and technology for the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC). Sundberg joined NPPC in 1994 as director of veterinary issues. Before that, he spent nine years in private practice as owner of a veterinary clinic in Madison, Neb. In 1990, he left the practice to pursue further education and join the Iowa State University faculty in the College of Veterinary Medicine, Department of Clinical Sciences.

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### New NPPC Committee to Address Animal Health, Food Security Issues

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) has established a new Animal Health and Food Security Committee to consider science-based approaches to these and emerging related issues facing the U.S. pork industry.

The committee is comprised of 17 members with expertise in a variety of swine health, welfare and food security issues. Members include veterinarians, scientists, pork producers and others engaged in the business of providing safe and wholesome pork products to the marketplace.

"Since Sept. 11, 2001, concerns have been raised about the potential for terrorism aimed at the nation's food supply," said Joy Philippi, a pork producer from Bruning, Neb., and chair of NPPC's Animal Health and Food Security Committee. "Food safety is a high priority for all stakeholders in the pork industry and we are all going to have to be increasingly vigilant about enhancing security measures

on the farm level," she said.

"Through the committee, NPPC will continue to communicate our concerns and offer science-based solutions to both Congress and government officials working together to strengthen our efforts to ensure the continued good health and value of the U.S. pork industry."

### DHS Launches Protected Critical Infrastructure Information Program

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has announced the launch of the Protected Critical Infrastructure Information (PCII) Program. The PCII Program enables the private sector to voluntarily submit infrastructure information to the federal government to assist the nation in reducing its vulnerability to terrorist attacks.

Critical infrastructure includes the assets and systems that, if disrupted, would threaten our national security, public health and safety, economy, and way of life.

Although these industries, services and systems may be found in both the public and private sectors, the

Department of Homeland Security estimates that more than 85 percent falls within the private sector.

Under provisions of the Critical Infrastructure Information Act of 2002 (CII Act), information that is voluntarily submitted per those provisions will be protected from public disclosure until and unless a determination is made by the PCII Program Office that the information does not meet the requirements for PCII. If validated as PCII, the information will remain exempt from public disclosure. The rule establishing the procedures for PCII was published in the *Federal Register*.

Effective immediately, members of the public who wish to submit information may do so through the PCII Program Office. For more information about the PCII Program, or to access the PCII regulation, visit the PCII Program Office website on [www.DHS.gov/pcii](http://www.DHS.gov/pcii).

### Rapid Foreign Animal Disease Detection to be Tested in Texas

Experimental technology to

### Veneman Appoints Members to FAD Advisory Committee

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman has appointed 17 members to the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases.

Appointed were: Mr. John B. Adams, National Milk Producers Federation; Dr. Richard E. Breitmeyer, California Department of Food and Agriculture; Dr. Corrie C. Brown, University of Georgia; Commissioner Gus R. Douglass, West Virginia

Department of Agriculture; Dr. Don A. Franco, National Renderers Association; Dr. Saul T. Wilson, Tuskegee University; Mr. Tobin Armstrong, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association; Mr. Richard L. Crawford, McDonald's Corporation; Dr. Robert J. Eckroade, University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Niall B. Finnegan, United States Army Veterinary Corps; Mr. James M.

Niewold, pork producer; Mrs. June M. Reed, American Sheep Industry Association; Dr. Jeremiah T. Saliki, Oklahoma State University; Dr. Charles R. Sherron, National Cattlemen's Beef Association; Dr. Wesley H. Towers, Delaware state veterinarian; Mr. Fred Small; Indian Stockgrowers Association; and Dr. Carol A. Ecker, Clayview Animal Clinic.

Appointments are for a two-year term.

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rapidly detect foot-and-mouth disease will be tested in Texas this spring as the result of an agreement between the U.S.

Department of Agriculture and the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine.

The agreement, which also will test classical swine fever, means the Texas A&M researchers will be responsible for testing cattle and hogs with new assays to determine the tests' accuracy in populations of disease-free animals.

"We're testing a test, not testing for disease," said Dr. Garry Adams, College of Veterinary Medicine associate dean for research and graduate studies. "The United States is currently free of these diseases, and such technological advances will improve our ability to respond to a foreign animal disease crisis should one develop."

Adams is collaborating on the project with Dr. Geoffrey Fosgate, assistant professor of veterinary anatomy and public health. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service funded the \$750,000 study through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Scientists from ARS, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Texas A&M are collaborating.

### U.S. Pork Exports Set Record

For the third straight year, worldwide U.S. pork exports smashed the record set in the prior year, reports the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

Following the record-breaking year 2002, which saw a three percent increase in U.S. pork exports, 2003 broke that record by four percent. According to statistics released by the U.S. Department of

Agriculture (USDA), U.S. pork exports (including variety meats) totaled 757,905 metric tons (mt) in 2003, up from 726,357 mt in 2002. The value of U.S. pork exports rose five percent to \$1.582 billion, breaking the record set in 2001.

U.S. pork sales to the United States' top export market, Japan, fell one percent after five consecutive record-breaking years for sales volume. Although exports to Japan were one percent lower in volume (269,621 mt) and eight percent lower in value (\$784.2 million), 2003 was the second best year for U.S. pork exports to Japan in volume and the third best year in value.

The U.S. pork industry also had a fourth successive record year in Mexico, its second largest market, breaking the records set in 2000, 2001 and 2002. U.S. pork exports to Mexico totaled 218,927 mt, a slight increase over 2002. The value of U.S. pork exports to Mexico, a new record was 17 percent higher – \$295 million.

### APHIS Issues Final Rule on Blood and Tissue Collection

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has issued a final rule amending the regulations governing interstate transportation of animals to establish requirements for the collection of blood and tissue samples from livestock and poultry at slaughtering and rendering establishments when it is necessary for disease surveillance.

The new rule will require slaughtering and rendering establishments to provide space and facilities to collect blood and tissue samples for disease testing.

The change is intended to improve surveillance programs for animal diseases, contribute to the eventual control or eradication of such diseases, and to assist in certifying the status of the United States or its regions with regard to freedom from specific animal diseases.

The rule was published in the *Federal Register* on March 4.

### Pork Producers Applaud Passage of Omnibus Appropriations Bill

National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) President Jon Caspers commended the Senate for passing the FY 2004 Omnibus Appropriations Bill.

Caspers said the action will allow important funding for safety and health programs to go forward. "This was not a time for politics, but rather moving forward and staying focused on the priorities of the American public – which includes keeping our food supply safe and secure."

Key areas funded in the bill included funding for a number of provisions critical to the U.S. pork industry including food and farm programs, conservation programs, research initiatives, trade promotion and animal health programs, including funding for a number of veterinarians, food safety inspectors and other critical animal health infrastructure personnel.

"We can now turn our attention to more important animal health issues which will include the implementation of a national animal identification system that will give consumers greater confidence in our food supply and enhance our ability to respond to animal health emergencies," Caspers said.

## Animal Identification to be Highlighted During National Conference and Trade Show

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) has announced ID/INFO EXPO 2004, a conference and trade show devoted to the subject of animal identification and information systems.

ID/INFO EXPO 2004 is scheduled for May 18-20, 2004, in Chicago, Ill. This event follows a similar national gathering facilitated by NIAA in 2002 and will focus largely on the U.S. Animal Identification Plan that has been proposed by a team of industry representatives and government officials working on a national system for animal identification in the U.S.

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman's recent call for immediate implementation of a national

animal tracking system (prompted by the diagnosis of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE, in Washington state) provides further

**ID • INFO**  
**EXPO 2004**

impetus for this event, which was already being planned by NIAA officials prior to her remarks on Dec. 30, 2003.

The preliminary schedule of events has a pre-conference seminar scheduled for May 18 for newcomers to the topic and a technology seminar also on that day. General sessions, seminars, and breakout dis-

cussion groups are scheduled for May 19 and 20. The trade show, showcasing a variety of animal identification manufacturers and information systems service providers, will open the evening of May 18 and run through the morning of May 20.

Topics will include premises identification, group/lot ID, ID distribution, ID devices/methods, governance, security, confidentiality, and many more.

Program and registration information will be published in late March. Individuals wanting to be sure they are included on the mailing list are encouraged to go to [www.animalagriculture.org](http://www.animalagriculture.org), click on the ID/INFO EXPO logo and fill out an online information request form.

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