

ID Info Expo
Chicago, IL
May 19, 2004

“One never notices what has been done,
One only can see what remains to be done.”

-Madame Marie Curie

“...what has been done...”

- *National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets*, released by the White House in February 2003. This document lists Agriculture and Food as a Critical Infrastructure for the country. This is the first time Agriculture and Food have been identified in such a manner, and it places the Sector at a significantly higher level of visibility with regard to planning and preparedness.
- *Homeland Security Presidential Directive #9*, signed by President Bush on January 30, 2004. This HSPD is focused entirely on the agriculture and food sector, and it calls upon Secretary Veneman to establish an agriculture and food defense plan for the country.
- *National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN)* A network of state veterinary diagnostic laboratories across the country to improve our surveillance capabilities for foreign and emerging disease agents. Further, the NAHLN laboratories will provide surge capacity when a foreign animal disease is diagnosed in the United States.
- *National Centers for Animal Health, Ames, IA* The critical functions at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory, National Animal Disease Center and the Center for Veterinary Biologics have been rebuilt, retooled and renamed to become an internationally recognized national reference laboratory. Although there has been significant progress, an additional \$178M has been requested in the President's budget to finish this important initiative.
- *Plum Island* Although the responsibilities for the physical facilities have been transferred to the Department of Homeland Security from USDA, the services provided by Plum Island are critical to our nation's agri-security. Nationally, there are more veterinarians trained as Foreign Animal Disease Diagnosticians (FADD's) than at any time in the history of the country. States have been given the opportunity to send state area veterinarians to these trainings, and we are much better prepared as a result of this initiative.
- *National Response Plan (NRP)* The development of the NRP has provided a framework for overall preparedness for the country. Agriculture and food are specifically identified in the NRP, and the use of the Incident Command System (ICS) to address disaster response efforts has been successfully integrated into the NRP. The ICS has been effectively used by the U. S. Forest Service for decades, and it now is the standard for responses to all catastrophic events throughout the country.
- *Emergency Operations Center (EOC)* The state-of-art EOC located on the 5th floor of the Veterinary Services building in Riverdale, MD serves as the nerve center for

responses to an animal health event. Dedicated about a year ago, the EOC is an essential component to the nation's rapid and coordinated response to an animal health emergency.

- *Sector Organization* This is an initiative lead by the Department of Homeland Security, with strong partnerships with USDA and the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services, to organize the agriculture and food sector for information sharing. The goal is establish a framework where important, and sometimes sensitive, information can be shared with individuals within the agriculture and food sector. The information sharing mechanism will, for the first time, provide for an exchange between the federal government and the agriculture and food sector with the ultimate goal of improving the security of the sector.
- *National Surveillance Unit* This new surveillance unit, headed by Dr. Brian McCluskey, is an initiative recommended in the *Animal Health Safeguarding Review*. The goals of this new unit include, but are not limited to, establishing a national surveillance plan format, prioritizing the nation's surveillance efforts and providing continuing assessments of the surveillance initiatives.
- *National Surveillance Coordinator* Another recommendation of the *Animal Health Safeguarding Review*, this position is capably filled by Dr. Valerie Ragan.

“...what remains to be done.”

USAIP

Nine essential components that, in my view, must be in the final plan:

1. **Seamless.** The plan must provide a seamless environment so product can move freely throughout the country. It must not impede commerce or place producers at a competitive disadvantage. State Veterinarians have always worked closely together, but this will require an even closer relationship.
2. **Common Technology.** The plan must decide on a common technology to be used in the animals. The system cannot be frequently rebuilt, so a technology must be chosen that will provide the longest value and the greatest usefulness.
3. **Robust IT System.** The plan must be supported by a robust IT system that can effectively and efficiently gather, store and retrieve massive quantities of data. The system must be able to support the 48-hour traceback goal. It must also be accessible for traces to advance our program diseases, as well as it's critical role in an animal health emergency.
4. **Education/Outreach.** In contrast to other educational initiatives that focused on a specific disease in a specific species, this effort must be focused on all livestock owners, market operators, veterinarians, extension, packers, processors and academicians.

5. Flexible. The plan must be flexible enough to respond to new, better technology.
6. Adaptable. The plan must be adaptable to the specific needs of each commodity.
7. Secure. The plan must preserve the integrity of the data to address concerns about confidentiality.
8. Affordable. While the cost of implementing a national identification system will likely be shared by state, federal and industry partners, the overall cost burden must not so great that the entire plan collapses.
9. Engagement. The plan will need refinements as we move forward, and everyone must stay engaged in the overall process. A draft Uniform Methods and Rules (UMR) will be presented at the USAHA meeting this fall in Greensboro, NC, and this will provide a continuing opportunity for all stakeholders to provide input into the process.

All of these efforts, those that have been done and those that remain to be done, are aimed at one thing: to preserve and protect the agricultural assets of the country.

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