

Q's & A's About the Pseudorabies Emergency Declaration

Q: What is pseudorabies?

A: Pseudorabies is a disease of swine that can also affect cattle, horses, dogs, cats, sheep, and goats. The disease is caused by pseudorabies virus, an extremely contagious herpesvirus that causes reproductive problems, including abortion, stillbirths, and even occasional death in breeding and finishing hogs.

Q: What action is the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) taking regarding pseudorabies in swine?

A: Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman declared an emergency November 2, 2000, under which he authorized the transfer of \$56.3 million from emergency contingency funds to USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to accelerate the eradication of pseudorabies in swine this fiscal year. Another \$30 million will be provided in fiscal year 2002.

Q. Why did USDA declare an emergency?

A. The threat of pseudorabies spread has increased significantly in the past year. Specifically in Iowa, where 35 percent of all butcher hogs are finished prior to slaughter, the number of pseudorabies-infected hogs increased dramatically due to mild winter conditions, swine movements, and decreased vaccination due to lowered swine prices last year. APHIS does not have the resources in its normal appropriations to counter this threat so an emergency was declared to prevent disease spread to unaffected areas.

Q: How many infected herds are in Iowa now?

A: There are 375 pseudorabies-infected herds in Iowa. There is one infected herd in New Jersey and one in Tennessee. The rest of the United States is free of pseudorabies.

Q: How will the money be used?

A: With these funds, APHIS' Veterinary Services (VS) personnel, in cooperation with State officials, will depopulate infected herds while paying producers fair market value for them, remove infected hogs from herds not depopulated, vaccinate and test all herds surrounding an infected herd and in other high risk areas, enforce compliance to vaccination and movement requirement regulations, and enhance surveillance efforts to ensure all infected herds are found rapidly.

Q: What is the breakdown of expenditures?

A: Of the funding allotted, \$48.7 million will be used for compensation, indemnification, testing, surveillance, and vaccination in Iowa; \$2.3 million will be used for indemnification, surveillance, and vaccination in Minnesota; and the remaining \$3.6 million will be used for surveillance, vaccination, and indemnification in Florida, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Missouri, and Nebraska to keep these States free of pseudorabies.

Q: Prior to this emergency, what was USDA doing?

A: USDA established a voluntary eradication program for pseudorabies in the United States in 1989. This cooperative program involves Federal, State, and industry participation. VS and State governments promulgate and enforce the intrastate regulations. Producers contribute by testing their herds and instituting control and eradication measures. The program's primary activities include surveillance, herd monitoring, and herd cleanup.

On December 24, 1998, Secretary Glickman announced that this effort would be accelerated. Started in the midst of record low prices for pork, this effort, called the Accelerated Pseudorabies Eradication Program (APEP), allowed USDA to pay hog farmers fair market value for the voluntary destruction of swine herds known to be infected with pseudorabies.

Q: What is the benefit of pseudorabies eradication?

A: This effort will enable USDA to eliminate pseudorabies from our national hog population, make pork production more profitable for our farmers, protect our international markets, and keep American agriculture safe. Pseudorabies costs U.S. pork producers about \$40 million a year in lost production as well as testing and vaccination costs.

Q: How important is the swine industry to the United States?

A: The United States is one of the world's largest producers of pork and is the second largest exporter of pork. U.S. pork production accounts for about 10 percent of the total world supply. The retail value of pork sold to consumers exceeds \$30 billion annually. In addition, the pork industry supports more than 600,000 jobs.

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