

## **Swine health leadership group meets**

*By Ellen Kasari and John Korslund, National Surveillance Unit*

---

The swine health program and surveillance issues related to classical swine fever (CSF), pseudorabies virus (PRV), swine brucellosis (SB), vesicular disease (primarily foot-and-mouth disease), and swine influenza virus (SIV) were the major topics discussed by the swine health leadership group at its recent meeting in Fort Collins, CO.

The swine health leadership group includes representatives from Veterinary Services (VS) Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH) National Surveillance Unit (NSU), National Center for Animal Health Programs (NACHP), National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL), National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), VS Surveillance and Identification Programs staff, VS Regional staff, and APHIS Wildlife Services. Additional stakeholders representing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Pork Board, American Association of Swine Veterinarians, USDA-Agricultural Research Service, CEAH-National Animal Health Monitoring System and Center for Emerging Issues, APHIS Legislative and Public Affairs, and VS Center for Veterinary Biologics were invited to the SIV discussions.

The swine health leadership group has evolved from the original CSF surveillance leadership group, which included program leaders of CEAH-NSU, VS program staff, and NAHLN, plus the VS Regional swine epidemiologists. The group's mission has expanded its activities to other swine programs as VS has moved to integrate swine program activities and surveillance operations for improved effectiveness and efficiency.

Part of the meeting focused on the SIV surveillance project that USDA recently initiated in collaboration with CDC. The participants worked in groups to discuss implementation issues associated with the project. One workgroup focused on characterizing case definitions of SIV illness in swine that would be included in the surveillance. A second group worked on a notification procedure between cooperating agencies and the public, particularly when suspected or confirmed SIV illness in humans appears related to exposure to swine.

Other meeting topics included reports on CSF surveillance, progress of FMD surveillance implementation in swine, and development of the revised SB surveillance plan.

PRV surveillance is in its early stages of implementation. Meeting participants focused on feedback to changes in surveillance streams already in place (feral swine and sow-boar surveillance) and revisions to the regulations and program standards. The group also discussed the PRV budget, protocols for testing procedures, potential changes in testing labs, and new surveillance streams.

CEAH-NSU is currently addressing revisions to SB surveillance design. NSU representatives requested leadership group input and feedback on SB surveillance objectives, target populations, and case definitions. The group debated identification of a standard diagnostic test to be used for SB surveillance and suggested that the test be based on recommendations from an expert panel for the United States Animal Health Association Brucellosis Scientific Advisory Committee.

The group also reviewed and discussed a CSF surveillance report that included data from July 2007 to June 2008, and identified some data entry issues that NVSL and VS program staff will address. The group established new target numbers for 2009 CSF surveillance.

Several concerns common to all swine surveillance programs were brought to focus. These include database structure, standardization of sample and specimen identification and submission, and laboratory test validation.