

The NVSL serves as a national, regional, and international veterinary diagnostic reference laboratory, as well as performs laboratory testing for the VS unit of APHIS. A new Strategic Plan was drafted to better address the national and global needs of NVSL relative to surveillance, emergency response capacity, disease control, and support of international trade as well as to recognize the need for a national veterinary diagnostic system. A new emphasis on NVSL's quality assurance program, reference role, partnerships, emergency preparedness, leadership in the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), and customer service is embodied in the Goals and Objectives of the plan.

ISO 179025 accreditation for NVSL has been identified as one of VS' top 11 initiative priorities; The NAHLN has been identified as one of VS' top 1 as well as one of APHIS' top 5 initiative priorities for fiscal year 2006.

Goal 1: Providing diagnostic service, reagents, and training in world-class facilities.

- Objective 1.* Ensure that NVSL services are aligned with the VS mission
- Objective 2.* Achieve and maintain appropriate accreditations/permits
- Objective 3.* Develop and adopt new assays and reagents in support of the program
- Objective 4.* Provide training and reference assistance to the diagnostic community
- Objective 5.* Improve, maintain, and protect facilities, the assets within the facilities (personnel, agents, etc.), and authorities to be able to meet current and changing program needs in cooperation with other agencies and Departments
- Objective 6.* Maintain an adequate budget for NVSL

Actions: G1. 02.

Action 1: Continue efforts to achieve ISO 17025 and/or other accreditations for specific tests by June 2006. Status: Internal audits have been conducted on all units/selected tests. An AAVLD accreditation team will visit NVSL in 5 to 6 months. A time line is in place to hire an accrediting body the summer of 2006, apply for accreditation in the fall of 2006, and have an accreditation audit by February 2007.

Action 2: Complete contractor assessment for implementation of ISO 17025 by the end of April 2005. Status: Unqualified applications were received, and the contract was reopened. Three vendors gave presentations June 30 and July 1, 2005. A contract was awarded on August 3, 2005. The contractor has provided audit training to 40 NVSL personnel.

Action 4: Complete hiring of appropriate QA personnel. Status: A Quality Assurance Manager is in place in each of the four diagnostic laboratories and for shared services; an interim quality coordinator has been designated.

G1. 05.

Action 2: Formulate the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory facility strategy by June 2006. Status: The Department of Homeland Security has received funding to study the construction of a new facility to replace the current PIADC, whether at the current site or elsewhere. It is anticipated that a new facility will be constructed in the next 6-12 years.

Action 3: Establish local business operation authority, where possible, in order to enhance program delivery (ongoing). Status: We follow the Federal Acquisition Regulations for awarding contracts between \$2,500-\$100,000 to small businesses. We continue to add new small business sources that include women owned, disadvantaged, Historically Underutilized Business Zone, veteran owned, and veteran disabled owned.

G1. 06.

Action 2: Generate data in support of budget requests by July 2006. Status: NVSL continues to utilize Activity Based Costing as a management tool to provide insight into the relationship between resources and products/services by quantifying the work performed at NVSL and to assign a cost to those products/services. Activity definitions have recently been expanded to reflect NVSL's changing role in relation to the NAHLN; data gathering for FY 2005 activities will occur over the next 2 months.

Goal 2: Preparing for and responding to animal health emergencies and emerging threats.

- Objective 1.* Build capacity for a massive, sustained response
- Objective 2.* Define roles of DHS and VS concerning emergency response laboratory activities
- Objective 3.* Integrate/expand role of NVSL (e.g., investigation) in bioterrorism/other disaster response capabilities

Actions: G2. 01.

Action 4: Ensure access to sufficient equipment capacity and product plan, MOUs where appropriate by July 2006. Status: A team has been identified to develop a plan by April 2006.

G2. 03.

Action 1: Maintain and expand role in Laboratory Response Network (LRN) and Food Emergency Response Network (FERN). Status: The Mycobacteria and Brucella (MB) Section passed both the variola and pox viruses proficiency tests in 2005. MB has updated brucella protocols and equipment and is prepared to conduct LRN time resolved fluorescence procedures for *Brucella*. The Bacterial Identification (BI) Section passed the anthrax isolation/identification proficiency test in 2005. BI can conduct LRN botulism types A, B, D, and E ELISA procedures. MB and BI are working with NVSL IT specialists to set up a data communication system with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to receive information/report results to the LRN.



Goal 3: Taking an active role in the leadership of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN).

- Objective 1.* Strengthen the NAHLN to build a system for surveillance and maximum emergency response capabilities
- Objective 2.* Strengthen NVSL to be a stronger reference laboratory for the NAHLN
- Objective 3.* Provide support to NAHLN laboratories

Actions: G3. 01.

Action 3: Explore methods to more clearly identify NAHLN funding by July 2007. Status: NVSL identified sub-allocations in both Veterinary Diagnostics and Animal Health Monitoring System line items. Discussions are ongoing regarding creating a new NAHLN line item.

Action 4: Support the NAHLN Coordinator by July 2006. Status: Position descriptions for an Associate (Veterinarian/Microbiologist) and a Program Assistant have been written and sent to Human Resources for classification.

Action 5: Develop and maintain the NAHLN information technology tool (various timelines). Status: NVSL has committed to fund positions at Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health to help with development. The new Laboratory Information Management System for NVSL is integrating NAHLN information system requirements.

G3. 02.

Action 2: Increase NVSL's resource commitment in support of the NAHLN as funding is identified. Status: NVSL supported Train the Trainer, along with the State, in 5 state locations. Two main budget requests in the last 2 years went to fund NAHLN and foreign animal disease testing.

Action 3: Develop and maintain NVSL Laboratory Information Management System with implementation by fall 2005. Status: A consultant service has been secured, and a vendor has been chosen. Currently, a core team of laboratory and IT personnel have been identified, and LabWare software and services have been acquired. The first phase will be completed 6-9 months.

Goal 4: Serving as an international reference laboratory.

- Objective 1.* Increase the recognition of NVSL as an international reference laboratory
- Objective 2.* Increase the opportunities to offer expertise as a reference laboratory

Actions: G4. 01.

Action 4: Maintain/add scientific experts to NVSL staff (ongoing). Status: The NVSL Leadership Council is exploring opportunities to achieve this action.

Goal 5: Maintaining a well-trained and responsive staff.

- Objective 1.* Recruit, develop, maintain, and retain an expert and diverse staff
- Objective 2.* Maintain a positive work environment
- Objective 3.* Maintain a customer service environment

Actions: G5. 01.

Action 1: Develop effective recruitment tools by June 2006. Status: Human Resources (HR) personnel have attended five career fairs this year, accompanied by individuals that have connections to the schools. HR also attended national recruitment training the week of October 31, 2005.

Action 4: Provide opportunities for training/advancement. Status: The NVSL Leadership Council has initiated discussions on succession planning for the NVSL workforce.

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