

Supporting International Trade

Veterinary Services (VS), a program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), facilitates the domestic and international marketability of U.S. animals and animal products through its National Center for Import and Export (NCIE). With its import and export teams and sanitary international standards team, NCIE is at the forefront of APHIS' efforts to safeguard the health of our Nation's agricultural resources. The growing interest in international agricultural trade has expanded VS' role to ensure that new trade opportunities are created while continuing to safeguard the Nation's animal health.

Under the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement, countries are required to base their sanitary import measures on science-based principles and guidelines. The WTO recognizes the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) as the international forum for setting animal health standards, reporting global animal health events and disease status, and presenting guidelines and recommendations on sanitary measures relating to animal health. At the same time, there is greater potential for countries to use disease concerns as artificial barriers to trade by attempting to establish import health requirements that protect their own industries and thus limit trade in animals and/or animal products.

OIE and International Standards

The OIE was established in Paris, France, in 1924 with the signing of an international agreement by 28 countries. As of May 2008, the organization had 172 member nations, each of which is represented by a delegate who, in most cases, is the chief veterinary officer of the country. OIE's mission is to improve animal health and welfare and prevent the spread of serious animal diseases. It works to achieve this mission through five objectives:

1. Ensuring transparency in global animal disease situations;
2. Collecting, analyzing, and disseminating veterinary scientific information;
3. Providing expertise and encouraging international solidarity in the control of animal diseases;

4. Safeguarding world trade by publishing health standards for international trade in animals and animal products; and,
5. Improving the legal framework and resources of national veterinary services.

Three major program areas within VS interact directly with OIE: NCIE's Sanitary International Standards Team, the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH), and the Center for the Diagnosis of Animal Diseases and Vaccine Evaluation for the Americas. Collectively, these three VS program areas help develop international animal health standards and advance other international veterinary activities that are important to animal health and trade.

Additionally, VS coordinates the activities of three other collaborating centers based in the United States that also contribute their expertise to international veterinary efforts and enable safe and healthy trade. These centers include: the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Zoonotic, Vector-Borne and Enteric Diseases (ZVED), USDA's Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory (SEPRL), and the Center for Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) at the University of Minnesota.

NCIE's Sanitary International Standards Team

NCIE's Sanitary International Standards Team guides the development of sound international health standards for safe trade in animals and animal products by coordinating consensus-based comments on proposed modifications to chapters of the OIE "Terrestrial Animal Health Code." The unit also:

- Maintains a database of disease and subject matter experts to review specific code chapters. Monitors and evaluates reports and scientific data produced by the OIE.
- Compiles information for "World Animal Health" reports and the annual tabular and disease reports on the world animal health status of member countries and submits semi-annual disease reports.
- Coordinates import and export efforts to address the international movement of livestock, biological products, and animal products, and provides recommendations on health conditions regarding the movement of animals and animal products.
- Conducts meetings with appropriate staff members, pertinent industry groups, and subject matter experts to review and develop positions for the safe movement of animals and animal products.

- Prepares agendas and briefs for the U.S. delegation attending the Quadrilateral Animal Health Committee Meeting (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States), the North American Animal Health Committee Meeting (Canada, Mexico, and the United States), and the OIE Annual Meeting.
- Recommends changes to effectively address trade issues and align USDA standards and policies with international standards.
- Represents APHIS' VS program and USDA at meetings with international officials and with livestock and poultry industry representatives.

Contact information for the sanitary international standards team:

USDA–APHIS–VS

National Center for Import and Export
Sanitary International Standards Team
4700 River Road, Unit 33
Riverdale, MD 20737
United States

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Fax: (301) 734–6402

E-mail: usa.oie@aphis.usda.gov

Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health: An OIE Collaborating Center

As an OIE collaborating center, CEAH shares its risk analysis and disease surveillance and control expertise with member countries and provides technical assistance and advice. CEAH fulfills the following objectives:

- Reviews, evaluates, and adapts methodologies and approaches to enhance animal disease surveillance systems and the risk analysis process.
- Promotes a harmonized approach to disease surveillance and risk analysis.
- Provides technical assistance to OIE member countries as needed.
- Improves the quality of animal disease surveillance and risk analysis by establishing a critical mass of trained individuals in OIE member countries.
- Networks with other OIE collaborating centers to coordinate activities.

Contact information for CEAH:

USDA–APHIS–VS

Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health
2150 Centre Avenue, Building B
Fort Collins, CO 80526
United States

Telephone: (970) 494–7214

Fax: (970) 472–2668

E-mail: ceah@aphis.usda.gov

Center for the Diagnosis of Animal Diseases and Vaccine Evaluation for the Americas: An OIE Collaborating Center

The Center for the Diagnosis of Animal Diseases and Vaccine Evaluation for the Americas is made up of three components—the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL), the Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB), and the Institute for International Cooperation in Animal Biologics (IICAB).

NVSL is comprised of a number of full-service laboratories with expertise in diagnostic tests for significant animal diseases found in the Americas. NVSL is committed to sharing and coordinating these procedures with other countries in the Americas. NVSL supports the OIE with the following activities:

- Provides diagnostic assistance, such as agent isolation and characterization.
- Supplies reference reagents to other laboratories, which can be used to standardize testing or for routine diagnosis.
- Evaluates diagnostic reagents used by other countries and exchanges sera to standardize and harmonize testing.
- Provides training in the diagnostic tests that NVSL performs.
- Consults on a wide range of diagnostic techniques.
- Conducts developmental projects to improve diagnostic techniques for diseases of significance in the Americas.

Contact information for NVSL:

USDA–APHIS–VS

National Veterinary Services Laboratories
P.O. Box 844
Ames, IA 50010
United States

Telephone: (515) 663–7286

Fax: (515) 663–7397

E-mail: nvsl.concerns@aphis.usda.gov

CVB is the sole confirmatory and investigatory testing laboratory involved in the regulation of commercial veterinary biologics (vaccines and diagnostic kits) in the United States. CVB supports OIE with the following activities:

- Develops, distributes, and uses worldwide standard protocols for biologics evaluation and trains scientists throughout the world on these protocols.
- Validates and provides standard reagents to biologics manufacturers and regulatory laboratories worldwide.
- Conducts developmental projects to improve biological techniques for diseases of significance in the Americas.

- Reviews, develops, compares, and harmonizes testing protocols in collaboration with industry and other government laboratories.
- Hosts scientific meetings in the area of veterinary biologics.

Contact information for CVB:

USDA–APHIS–VS
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IICAB, based at Iowa State University, concentrates its efforts on educational endeavors and facilitating international communication and harmonization related to the availability, safety, and efficacy of veterinary biologics. The IICAB concentrates on the following activities:

- Offers training on scientific principles behind vaccine safety and efficacy.
- Works with other international organizations to harmonize regulations regarding veterinary biologics in the Americas.
- Assists developing countries to obtain veterinary biologics for specific unmet needs and in their efforts to manufacture, import, and regulate veterinary biologics and diagnostics.

Contact information for IICAB:

Iowa State University
College of Veterinary Medicine
Institute for International Cooperation in Animal Biologics
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Fax: (515) 294–8259
E-mail: iicab@iastate.edu

National Center for Zoonotic, Vector-Borne and Enteric Diseases: An OIE Collaborating Center

As an OIE collaborating center, ZVED focuses primarily on zoonotic infections (diseases transmitted between animals and humans). The center coordinates its activities with USDA and other OIE collaborating centers and intergovernmental organizations in an effort to strengthen collaboration between human and animal health sectors for global disease detection. The ZVED, in collaboration with other OIE centers, conducts the following activities:

- Coordinates joint OIE-CDC symposia on emerging zoonoses detection and control.
- Assists with strengthening surveillance, prevention, and control activities for zoonoses—particularly those diseases that represent emerging and

re-emerging threats to public health—by supporting outbreak investigations and assisting the OIE and member countries in emergencies, including on-site consultation during outbreaks and epidemics.

- Reviews and provides comment on relevant zoonoses chapters of OIE technical manuals through the official U.S. delegate to the OIE.
- Identifies newly-isolated zoonotic agents and exchanges these with international and other relevant laboratories; assists in the identification and surveillance of microbial strains where appropriate, including subtyping and antimicrobial susceptibility testing.
- Trains national professionals (scientists, veterinary public health professionals, and laboratory technicians) for zoonotic epidemic preparedness, laboratory strengthening, and epidemiologic investigation.
- Assists OIE with efforts to strengthen laboratory capacities in laboratory safety, biosecurity, laboratory design and containment, occupational safety and health, and personal protective equipment guidance.
- Collaborates on zoonotic disease research recommended by the OIE expert committees, scientific groups, and other consultative meetings.
- Fosters research on the epidemiology of zoonotic agents, including collaborating and analyzing epidemiologic information for the OIE and member countries.
- Develops and recommends methods of surveillance and control of zoonotic diseases.
- Promotes information exchange on surveillance and control of zoonotic diseases.
- Performs consultative work on zoonoses for OIE member institutions and laboratories upon request.

Contact information for ZVED:

Centers For Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Zoonotic, Vector-Borne and Enteric Diseases, Division of Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases
1600 Clifton Road, MS-D63
Atlanta, GA 30333
United States
Telephone: (800) 311–3435

Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory: An OIE Collaborating Center

USDA's SEPRL conducts basic and applied research on avian influenza, exotic Newcastle disease, West Nile virus, and other exotic and emerging viruses of poultry and other avian species.

As an OIE collaborating center, SEPRL's Center for Research on Emerging Avian Diseases supports

OIE with the following activities:

- Provides research information to continue to refine the OIE “Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes” and “Manuals of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial and Aquatic Animals.”
- Coordinates scientific and technical studies in collaboration with the other laboratories or organizations.
- Provides technical experts for OIE missions.
- Provides research sabbaticals for scientists in OIE member countries.
- Provides assistance with in-house training in molecular diagnostics.

Contact information for SEPRL:

USDA–Agricultural Research Service
Southeast Poultry and Research Laboratory
934 College Station Road
Athens, GA 30605
United States
Telephone: (706) 546–3433

Center for Animal Health and Food Safety at the University of Minnesota

CAHFS is the United States’ newest collaborating center. It fosters public-private partnerships that advance new knowledge, innovative experiential learning programs, and scientifically-sound public policy on global animal health and food safety leadership.

Its focus is to help veterinary professionals in OIE member countries improve the technical skills needed to respond to animal health problems using its expertise in distance education and online learning.

CAHFS will assist member states through training and support activities in four areas:

- Developing the technical skills of individual veterinary service professionals. Training options can be tailored and include on-site courses, specialized internships, distance courses, and intensive course offerings leading to professional certification or an advanced degree.
- Advancing the capacity of OIE member countries’ national veterinary services. Upon request, CAHFS can help bring together the public and private sectors in individual countries in order to complete after-action reports and identify shared priorities for strengthening veterinary services’ technical, logistic, and communications capacities. CAHFS may assist countries to develop a facilitator’s manual to guide their assessment and implementation process.

- Providing seminars and courses on specialized topics for key veterinary services’ audiences. Topics may address critical competencies of veterinary infrastructure or cover basic management competencies, such as enhancing communication skills.
- Providing leadership development opportunities for current leaders and the next generation of veterinary service professionals. CAHFS will identify and train individuals who can be catalysts for leading animal health initiatives at the national level. It will continue to work with universities, multinational companies, and producer organizations to raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges presented by globalization and the application of international standards and agreements on animal health.

Contact information for CAHFS:

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