

NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

The Veterinary Services (VS) branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has the infrastructure and expertise to work in collaboration with animal-health and production industries, universities, and State and Federal partners to collect, collate, and analyze animal-health data systematically and disseminate vital information promptly.

Through its infrastructure, expertise, and array of established agency partnerships, VS is positioned to respond effectively to Homeland Security Presidential Directive HSPD-9 ("Defense of United States Agriculture and Food") and to meet national needs for improved food security and enhanced economic viability. VS is uniquely prepared to assume the role of leader and coordinator in building a National Animal Health Surveillance System (NAHSS).

NAHSS will be a network of alliances and partnerships among multiple government agencies and private entities. The network's purpose will be to protect animal health, public health, national economic viability, and social welfare associated with animal populations.



"A comprehensive, coordinated, integrated surveillance system is the foundation for animal health, public health, food safety and environmental health."

—Animal Health Safeguarding Review 2001

A comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated surveillance system will help to establish, improve, and maintain the Nation's animal health, veterinary public health, and associated food-safety and environmental-health systems.

WHAT THE NAHSS WILL DO

The NAHSS will establish and maintain a surveillance system capable of detecting and surveying foreign and emerging diseases rapidly. The system also will evaluate and enhance surveillance for current eradication and disease-control programs. Finally, it will monitor disease trends and threats in the United States and other countries and provide timely and accurate animal health information.

As one of many components—within and outside of agriculture—the NAHSS will help improve the Nation's ability to detect the early warning signs of biological threats. This work will entail close cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security.

"A national strategy, melding the Nation's Federal, State and local resources, would be capable of responding to any type of animal health emergency, including foreign animal diseases and bioterrorism."

—Animal Health Safeguarding Review 2001

The NAHSS will provide greater protection from endemic, emerging, and foreign animal diseases (FADs) that could affect the Nation's livestock, poultry, and wildlife populations. VS has established priorities and created a roadmap to facilitate the transition from current surveillance activities to a new, more effective and efficient NAHSS.

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

Early Detection and Assessment of FADs

- Design FAD surveillance plan(s) for high-priority diseases identified using a standardized plan format.
- Maintain an FAD surveillance capability inventory to facilitate systems integration and the analysis of any gaps found in the system.
- Establish connections with domestic and international sources of disease-surveillance information.

"Agents that could be used in a subversive manner to disrupt animal agriculture are not new to veterinarians. However, the need to enhance and maintain a state-of-the-art national surveillance system has never been more critical."

—Animal Health Safeguarding Review 2001



Early Detection and Assessment of Emerging Domestic Diseases

- Coordinate and collaborate with stakeholders on the design and implementation of emerging-disease surveillance.
- Develop and apply new technologies for emerging-disease detection and data analysis.
- Educate producers and practitioners about emerging diseases.

Enhance Surveillance for Current "Program Diseases"

- Evaluate and design rigorous, scientific methods to assess progress in current VS disease-prevention, control, and eradication programs.
- Develop standards, quality-control procedures, and performance measures for all surveillance systems.

Collaborate With Industry To Develop Surveillance for Diseases Significantly Affecting Production and Marketing

- Monitor animal health and production trends.



The transition from the historical model for surveillance to a new National Animal Health Surveillance System is underway...

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the NAHSS, contact the National Surveillance Unit of VS' Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health at 2150 Centre Avenue, Building B., Mailstop 2E7, Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117. You may also send e-mail to the unit at national.surveillance.unit@aphis.usda.gov. And further details are also available on the Web at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/ncahs/nsu>.



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