



VETERINARY SERVICES: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

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A Message to Veterinary Services



Dear Colleagues:

This document is about changing Veterinary Services (VS). One of the things that I like best about it is its recognition that change in an organization like ours can't be dictated from above. Instead, this document calls on all VS employees—working at local levels—to take on the primary responsibility for implementing our organization's priorities. Our work to grow and innovate can only succeed if all of us commit to it.

We've been talking for the past 3 years about change. We've talked together several times about the need for VS to adapt to better meet the needs of our partners in the States, Tribes, industries, and universities.

The landscape of animal health is continually evolving. We all see rapid advances in technology and disease identification. We see the emergence and reemergence of infectious diseases and zoonoses. We know the expansion of trade is driving the demand for 24/7 access to services and resources.

VS has a long history as our Nation's premier veterinary authority. We earned that reputation because of the knowledge and expertise of our employees and because of our skill in delivering VS' traditional programs and services. However, we can't rest on our reputation.

Our stakeholders and customers expect more of us every year. We must realize that people are thinking differently about the products that reach their tables. They understand how animal health affects their communities, families, and everyday lives.

Our challenge is to continue our evolution—to focus not only on the issues of today, but also those of tomorrow. To do that, VS will enhance and refocus the strengths that have made us the Nation's animal health leader. This *New Perspective* document explains how we'll reposition VS for the future demands of animal health.

We can't continue to offer the same services, to the same people, at the same speed. To remain relevant, we can't simply maintain the status quo.



VS: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Since we launched the VS2015 initiative, VS employees from across the organization have been working for the past 3 years to more clearly define our future. As a result of their hard work, we've set 5 goals for our organization and our workforce:

- ❖ Goal 1: Transform the Culture of VS
- ❖ Goal 2: Build New Collaborations
- ❖ Goal 3: Optimize Animal Health Competencies
- ❖ Goal 4: Support Readiness and Response
- ❖ Goal 5: Invest in Technical Infrastructure

The ideas that unite these goals are flexibility, partnership, and innovation. By embracing these values, we will be able to meet 21st century challenges and continue our role as the Nation's animal health leader. We will be able to use our strengths in better, more creative ways.

Our *New Perspective* was developed through intensive conversations and collaboration involving many VS employees. It represents the collective thinking of those entrusted with VS' core mission, and it benefits from the combined wisdom of our staff, partners, and stakeholders.

I thank everyone who contributed to this dynamic vision of our future. Their work will help us all find better ways to deliver the programs and services that have made VS great.

Change is happening in VS. It's up to all of us to support that change and keep VS at the heart of animal agriculture now and in the future.

Sincerely,

John R. Clifford
Deputy Administrator
USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services



I.

Promoting Change in VS

Throughout its history, our organization has played a central role in protecting the health of American animal agriculture. We've offered essential services related to the import and export of animals, animal products, and biologics; emergency preparedness and response; animal disease diagnostics; animal vaccine development; and disease surveillance, control, and eradication.

These core strengths are impressive, but they're not enough to maintain VS' relevance in the modern world of animal health. We now recognize that the forces of change at work in animal agriculture are bringing people, animals, and our environment together. They're creating a powerful dynamic that binds animal health with the health of people and the safety of our ecosystem.

In this shifting environment, VS sees the opportunity to better use our programs and resources to reapply and refocus our core strengths. We see a chance to position our organization to better navigate the rapid changes in the way animal agriculture operates. For us to thrive, we need to change the way we execute our mission and work together differently.

A critical part of VS' long-term strategy is to enhance our workforce's abilities to innovate and make decisions while working in purposeful, collaborative settings. VS, as an organization, is as strong as its employees. This new perspective on our organization and the new thinking outlined in this document require teamwork, determination, and motivation from every VS employee.



Core Principles

Our *New Perspective* addresses the critical steps we're taking to fully realize our place in the new animal health landscape. It speaks to the way VS is proactively changing and has changed.

Ultimately, for our ideas about change in VS to succeed, it's the responsibility of every VS employee to actively find ways in their daily work to make these ideas actionable. To foster change in VS—to become the organization we see ourselves being in 2015 and beyond—we need the help of every VS employee as we work to:

- ❖ Capitalize on generational and cultural changes in our workforce
- ❖ Promote innovation and improvement at all levels of our organization
- ❖ Engage stakeholders to build trust and productive working relationships
- ❖ Adopt regulatory flexibility by focusing on performance-based outcomes
- ❖ Take advantage of new technology to improve disease management
- ❖ Design a National Animal Health Surveillance System that rewards participation, encourages new partnerships, and ensures information is available to us when we need it
- ❖ Act immediately to address disease incidents; and at the same time, continue to evaluate the resources we need to respond
- ❖ Reshape our mission activities with particular attention to our integral role in One Health
- ❖ Maximize the use of information technology (IT) to get us closer to working at the speed of commerce
- ❖ Manage our resources in a changing economy and with flat or declining budgets
- ❖ Ask all VS employees to be leaders who are accountable for the success and excellence of our organization

These principles can seem abstract. To make them concrete, we've articulated a clear vision for our organization and set specific goals, objectives, and priorities to achieve that vision.

[To submit questions or comments on Section I, click here.](#)



II.

Vision, Mission, Goals

VS' New Perspective—our new vision for our organization—belongs to every VS employee. It comes directly from the many innovative ideas we developed by working together and in dialogue with our stakeholders. It represents a coherent, new organizational strategy that starts with a new vision statement for our organization and our work.

Vision

As the Nation's veterinary authority, VS improves the health, productivity, and quality of life for animals and people, and maintains and promotes the safety and availability of animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics. VS integrates One Health principles with our USDA business objectives by contributing leadership, expertise, infrastructure, networks, and systems to collaborate effectively with local, State, Tribal, national, and international partners. Our comprehensive and integrated surveillance activities provide us the capability to achieve national goals for animal disease prevention, detection, and early response.

Mission

As the recognized animal health leader and trusted partner, Veterinary Services safeguards the health of animals, people, and the environment

This refocused vision and mission mean that when members of the animal health community look to VS, they'll see a trusted partner, a best-in-class workforce, and an organization of employees who lead in animal health.

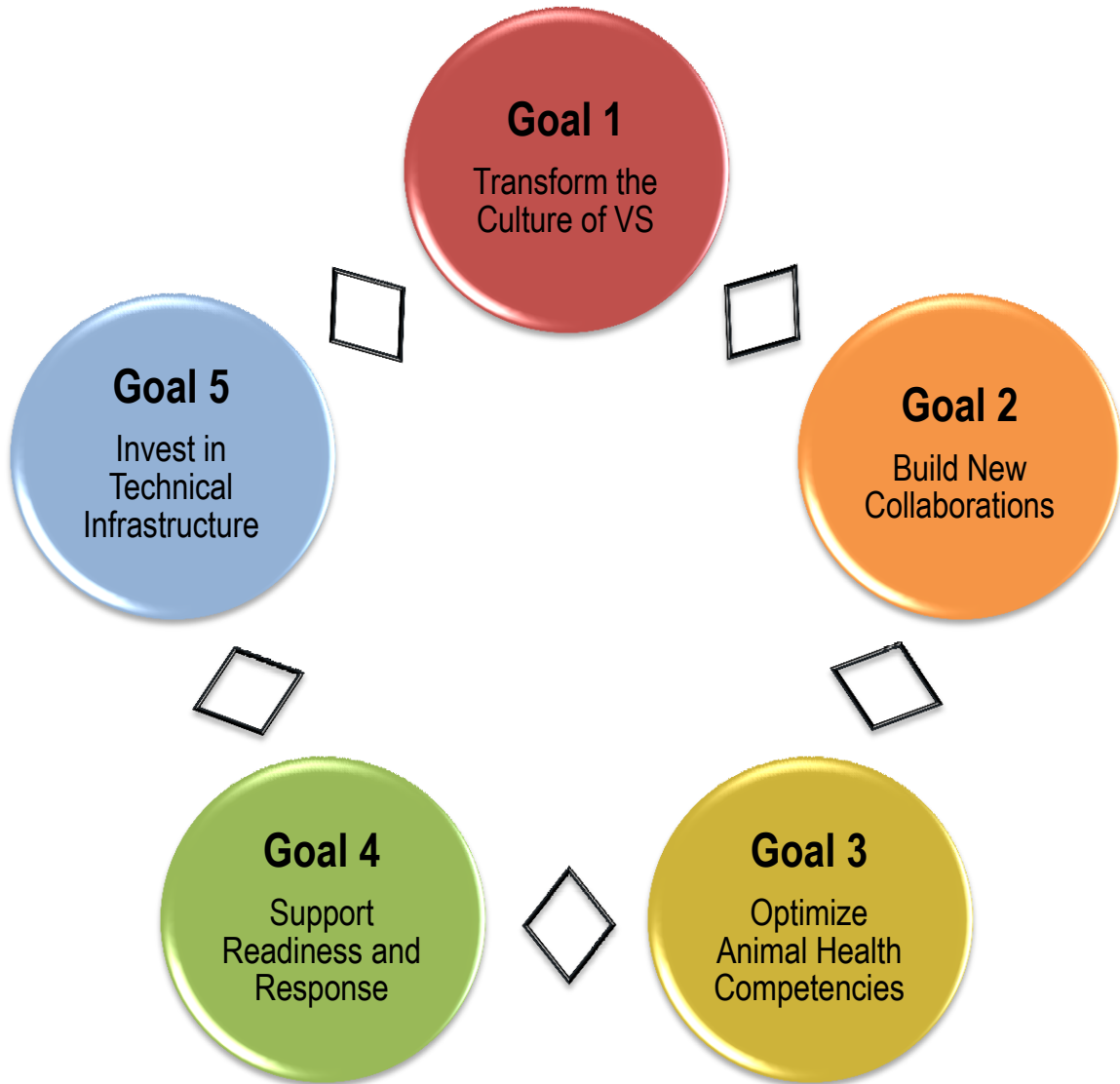
It's part of our vision that VS will be nationally engaged in response, research, and service by continuing to build an organization that encourages innovative thinking, action, and productive collaborations.

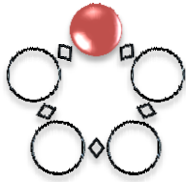
We recognize that to meet our vision, we need to promote a culture of flexibility and inclusion and find ways to deliver our programs and services differently and better. The goals we've developed speak to those ideas.



Goals

Our goals require more critical thinking about how we do our work. They mean working harder to equip VS employees with the skills and tools they need to do their jobs. They are the keys to our role as the Nation's animal health leader and trusted partner.





GOAL 1: Transform the culture of VS to meet the evolving needs of the animal health community

Objective	What this means	Priorities VS will focus on
1.1 Empower and enable effective, rapid decision making at the most appropriate levels	Employees need guidelines on the types of decisions made at various organizational levels. Supervisors must increase communication, improve leadership training, and discuss decision making opportunities.	1.1.1. Provide employees with real-time awareness and access to information for rapid decision making 1.1.2. Improve peer-to-peer networks 1.1.3. Develop communication methods and products that enable VS employees to provide excellent customer service
1.2 Develop a capable, Effective, and flexible workforce	VS must invest more in its employees. Given tight budgets, we need a variety of creative training options to enhance both technical and leadership skills. Better knowledge management to help employees share information, mentoring, skills development based on individual development plans, and challenging work assignments are all critical.	1.2.1. Senior leaders focus on identifying priorities, setting strategies, and developing relationships with key stakeholders, and setting the ethical tone for VS through their actions 1.2.2. Identify and use resources to meet leadership development needs aligned with strategic USDA and APHIS initiatives 1.2.3. Develop and provide communications and engagement training to employees to ensure effective collaboration with colleagues and stakeholders 1.2.4. Enrich the skills and expertise of all employees to meet current and future scientific and technical needs 1.2.5. Develop knowledge management processes to share employees' insights and experiences throughout the organization
1.3 Establish a framework for effective service delivery	Regulatory change is essential to meet the needs of our customers. VS must find better ways to manage projects, track their progress, and learn from their outcomes. We know our resources are limited; we'll find more efficient ways to do our work. Part of that is making better use of IT. Another part is simplifying administrative processes.	1.3.1. Create a more flexible, transparent regulatory framework to meet evolving animal health needs 1.3.2. Implement an organizational governance model to evaluate, prioritize, and assess activities across all business units 1.3.3. Streamline administrative processes in support of USDA, APHIS, and VS goals 1.3.4. Align IT strategies with business processes to ensure optimal efficiency
1.4 Allocate resources based on organizational priorities	VS leaders will clearly communicate priorities to effectively use our limited resources. VS employees need to be financially savvy, working together to ensure our limited resources are aligned with our mission. All levels of VS must be committed to fiscal and programmatic responsibility and accountability.	1.4.1. Implement a flexible financial management processes across VS 1.4.2. Enhance financial competency at appropriate organizational levels 1.4.3. Routinely measure costs against benefits 1.4.4. Improve operational sustainability through stewardship of natural resources 1.4.5. Balance work demands against strategic goals and assign resources based on VS priorities



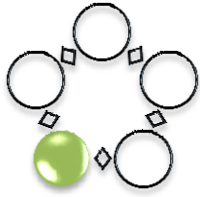
GOAL 2: Build new collaborations and partnerships while sustaining existing ones

Objective	What this means	Priorities VS will focus on
<p>2.1 Improve overall VS collaboration by identifying key relationships and identifying the mutual goals of those relationships</p>	<p>As VS integrates One Health and non-traditional stakeholders into our activities, it's important that we clearly identify the goals of our collaborations. We need to do a better job of reaching out to stakeholders. We also need to develop better information products that all VS employees can access easily and use to share with stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1.1. Formalize partnerships through the use of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and cooperative agreements 2.1.2. Include clearly defined service level agreements (SLAs) and performance measures in agreements for VS-funded collaborations (e.g. colleges, universities, and other entities) 2.1.3. Develop an inventory of current and potential VS partners and collaborations 2.1.4. Develop an inventory of industry-related events for potential VS sponsorship and participation 2.1.5. Conduct outreach activities to identify nontraditional stakeholders (i.e., surveys, focus groups, industry events) 2.1.6. Coordinate with public health and other agencies to develop an integrated infrastructure for detecting and responding to zoonotic agents 2.1.7. Develop community portals to enrich communication between communities, (e.g. One Health, emergency response, and surveillance)
<p>2.2 Establish strategies and processes that successfully build and maintain relationships</p>	<p>We need clear guidelines on how and when to include stakeholders in our decision making. We must clearly articulate all expectations related to collaborations. We need to find multiple ways to get feedback and input from stakeholders (both internal and external). The VS workforce needs more training on negotiation and communication skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2.1. Use Web-based collaborative tools to broaden outreach 2.2.2. Evaluate the effectiveness of Web-based collaboration 2.2.3. Implement the VS Communications and Marketing Plan 2.2.4. Train VS employees to use the VS Communications and Marketing Plan
<p>2.3 Implement an overarching strategy for data/information sharing with external stakeholders</p>	<p>VS needs a process for sharing data and information with external partners. We must establish procedures and priorities for information sharing. We must also identify ways to share information within our technical infrastructure and ways to address the complexities of sharing information across a varied group of stakeholders and partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.3.1. Enhance the working relationship with Legislative and Public Affairs to improve external communications 2.3.2. Establish VS policy on data/information sharing agreements and develop applicable processes



GOAL 3: Optimize and leverage our unique competencies in animal health to meet the demands of the 21st century

Objective	What this means	Priorities VS will focus on
3.1 Optimize surveillance competencies	VS must implement novel ways of collecting and evaluating surveillance data for transboundary and domestic diseases. We must continue to engage partners in developing new surveillance streams and strategies, leverage new tools and technologies, and maintain and analyze surveillance data.	3.1.1. Acquire data for analysis, reporting, and decision making from existing and new surveillance streams 3.1.2. Develop a flexible records management system for new and existing surveillance streams 3.1.3. Ensure analytical tools are available to meet surveillance goals 3.1.4. Develop flexible, scalable, transparent parameters for surveillance and a supportive regulatory framework 3.1.5. Develop processes for accredited veterinarians to serve as a surveillance data source
3.2 Improve VS support for animal and animal product commerce	Regulatory support for commerce in animals and products is a key role for VS. We must approach trade based on hazards, risks, and international standards. As trade expands, our role in protecting the quality of products and the safety of livestock must also expand.	3.2.1. Expand certification services 3.2.2. Expand the use of science-based assessments to support animal and animal product commerce 3.2.3. Improve competency in developing, influencing, interpreting, and navigating international standards 3.2.4. Harmonize interstate and international movement standards (including incorporating welfare standards) 3.2.5. Develop a unified framework for the interstate movement of animals and animal products
3.3 Develop, maintain, and promote world-class diagnostic capabilities	VS leads a world-class laboratory network able to support and implement innovative strategies for responding to animal health incidents. Surge capacity and the development of the network are essential to quickly identify and control livestock diseases and deploy new response tools.	3.3.1. Develop, lead and support animal health diagnostic laboratory networks 3.3.2. Develop and implement a model to determine U.S. animal health laboratory needs (including surge capacity when needed) 3.3.3. Enhance U.S. animal health reference and confirmatory laboratory capabilities and services
3.4 Facilitate the development and availability of diagnostic and biologic tools to address animal health issues	We need to support cutting-edge science through our world class facilities and expertise. Our response to emerging issues may depend on our ability to partner and develop needed tools and policies for their use.	3.4.1. Optimize our ability to identify a need and expedite licensing of tools to fulfill that need 3.4.2. Establish policies for the use of tools that may be used to help address animal health issues 3.4.3. Promote, develop, and use all aspects of our animal health expertise
3.5 Enhance our ability to identify, evaluate, and respond to animal health issues	Our role in One Health must expand for VS to be an effective leader and partner at the animal-human-environment interface. To carry out its mission, VS must foster a team approach, leveraging our expertise in methods of intelligence gathering, analysis, modeling, and risk assessment.	3.5.1. Leverage partnerships to incorporate an animal health perspective on the ecology and epidemiology of agents that affect animals, humans, and the environment 3.5.2. Optimize the use of multidisciplinary expertise to apply modern methods of intelligence gathering, analysis, modeling, and risk assessments in addressing animal health issues 3.5.3. Assess current program activities and determine our optimal business objectives 3.5.4. Develop strategies for effective risk communication



GOAL 4: Support readiness and response, balancing the needs of animal agriculture with the interests of people and the environment

Objective	What this means	Priorities VS will focus on
<p>4.1 Provide recognized Federal leadership for animal health incidents and act as a trusted partner/animal health advocate in all other incidents where animals are involved</p>	<p>VS provides leadership in adverse animal health events. Successful response to animal events requires collaboration. A clear understanding is needed on the types of incidents warranting a response, the appropriate response for a given incident, and the partners involved. Authorities, roles, and responsibilities of partners must be clarified. VS must provide animal health expertise when supporting other types of incidents.</p>	<p>4.1.1. Establish reliable and consistent funding sources for preparedness and response 4.1.2. Refine collaboration with partner agencies and organizations 4.1.3. Ensure that critical incident information is available to responders and interested parties at all levels 4.1.4. Develop and support preparedness programs following Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program principles 4.1.5. Monitor international and domestic threats and hazards</p>
<p>4.2 Foster an animal health community that is prepared to rapidly and expertly respond to animal health incidents</p>	<p>All VS employees must be qualified and prepared to respond to animal incidents, regardless of their job function or location. We need cadres of highly trained employees to rapidly deploy, set up incident command posts, and swiftly order resources while initiating response plans and operations. Responses must be scalable as an incident becomes more or less complex or geographically dispersed.</p>	<p>4.2.1. Develop a sufficient number of highly trained core responders 4.2.2. Identify, develop, and track required response skills and credentials for all VS employees 4.2.3. Identify and develop a resource pool of animal health workers, professionals, and technicians that will provide surge capacity for large incidents 4.2.4. Build and effectively manage adequate stockpiles of material resources to support rapid response. 4.2.5. Build a library of response plans, incident management standard operating procedures, risk analyses, and continuity of business plans 4.2.6. Develop and/or acquire state-of-the-art technology to support incident management activities (e.g. diagnostics, vaccines, euthanasia, disposal, etc.) 4.2.7. Provide a comprehensive information management system for incident management activities</p>
<p>4.3 Balance the interests of animal agriculture, consumers, animal welfare, public health, and the environment</p>	<p>The eradication of a disease agent is no longer the sole priority of a potential response. As we respond to incidents, we will take into account the interests and perspectives of consumers, local communities, animal welfare, business, commerce, and the environment.</p>	<p>4.3.1. Use science-based information to minimize the introduction and release of a disease agent, as well to allow—with acceptable risk—the movement of animals and animal products and byproducts 4.3.2. Establish certification and auditing programs using proven analytical tools and the best available data and evidence 4.3.3. Collaborate with partners and stakeholders to establish continuity-of-business and return-to-business plans 4.3.4. Use the best practices and technology to ensure the welfare of animals 4.3.5. Use the best practices and technology to minimize impacts to the environment</p>



GOAL 5: Invest in an integrated technical infrastructure to support the VS mission

Objective	What this means	Priorities VS will focus on
<p>5.1 Acquire Enterprise Software Services and technical delivery through cloud computing (when appropriate) to support VS operations and field activities</p>	<p>VS' role as an emergency support agency, and the security required to effectively collect, manage, and analyze surveillance and response data in the field requires us to implement cutting-edge information processes for effective data and information management. To support our roles in import/export and traceability, a fully functional system must be available to VS and its partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1.1. Adopt cloud services when appropriate, to increase or decrease capacity quickly and easily in support of our mission 5.1.2. Retire legacy IT systems and migrate them to cloud-based solutions 5.1.3. Support the use of mobile data stream collection devices 5.1.4. Enhance our capabilities for data manipulation and analysis 5.1.5. Implement security processes that allow the routine use of mobile communication devices
<p>5.2 Implement efficient and technologically advanced systems to securely acquire and deliver data</p>	<p>Information sharing is crucial to our regulatory role. We must take the lead on publishing data and technology standards to effectively share information across our stakeholder community. We also have to carefully protect data and information for its intended uses. From the use of mobile devices in the field to cloud computing centers available to support customers 24/7, it's critical that we deploy secure, effective solutions to support the work of VS employees and stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.2.1. Implement Agency standards, create a national framework, and enforce information sharing agreements to ensure data security and confidentiality 5.2.2. Validate that VS and our stakeholders are technologically capable of receiving, holding, and sharing data as expected 5.2.3. Ensure that technology investments, business processes, and IT processes are linked through the use of the VS IT Roadmap
<p>5.3 Use social networks to improve information sharing</p>	<p>Networking is a potentially powerful and critical element in VS' communication and marketing strategy. It is essential that we use all the tools we can to reach out to customers and stakeholders in innovative, collaborative ways. A multigenerational workforce and customer base require multiple pathways to empower our partners to participate fully in shared activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.3.1. Aggressively work with USDA and APHIS authorities to implement Web 2.0 services (blogs, Facebook, Twitter) wherever possible

[To submit questions or comments on Section II, click here.](#)



III.

Implementation

Implementation led by the VS Management Team (VSMT)

Change is already happening in VS. To continue our momentum, the VSMT has identified 18 immediate priorities that respond to the goals and objectives in this document. Some of the VSMT's priorities are continuations of important ongoing activities; others call on VS to complete critical actions initiated as part of our VS2015 planning. However, all 18 immediate priorities represent the kind of innovation at the heart of this *New Perspective*.

The VSMT is responsible for ensuring these actions are completed within fiscal years (FY) 2011–12. Detailed descriptions, project plans, timelines, and progress reports for these priorities will be posted on the VS2015 SharePoint site (<http://animalhealth/2015>). Members of the VSMT and the Grassroots Network will also regularly share updates about these priorities.

VS Management Team Implementation Priorities for FY 2011–12 (grouped by theme, not listed in order of importance)

1. **Publish the animal disease traceability (ADT) regulation for livestock moving interstate.** This will mark a significant milestone in VS' use of performance-based regulations. Publication will validate VS' innovative, more inclusive, more proactive approach to stakeholder engagement and outreach.
2. **Help States and Tribes to develop, document, and implement their traceability plans aligned with ADT objectives** by: providing funds through cooperative agreements; providing low-cost identification tags and making other identification technology available for purchase; and establishing a cost effective, highly integrated IT infrastructure using both internal and external systems that provide functions to support traceability.
3. **Establish traceability implementation plans** (including resource needs and budgets) for achieving compliance with the regulations; properly administering official identification devices, and evaluating the traceability plans of the States and Tribes. This is another critical first step in implementing the new traceability regulation.
4. **Implement changes to the tuberculosis (TB), brucellosis, and pseudorabies programs** using the regulatory change model piloted by the ADT rule. Specifically, we will complete the TB/brucellosis rules and implement the new brucellosis slaughter surveillance plan that decreases the number of samples taken and the number of laboratories used (based on the current low national prevalence of the disease). We'll also develop new regulations for swine health that replace the current pseudorabies and brucellosis regulations and provide for a National, rather than a State status, system.
5. **Conduct cost-benefit analyses of wildlife disease prevalence reduction and disease transmission risk reduction.** The first analysis will focus on brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area and will lay the conceptual groundwork for similar analyses for other diseases and settings.



6. **Develop and implement a process to regularly reevaluate the goals and strategies used in animal disease programs based on available resources and other animal health priorities.** The process should include cost-benefit and risk analyses and stakeholder input. This will allow VS to continually and strategically realign our programs and services with the changing needs of agriculture and global animal health. It will also allow VS to better evaluate our performance and actively improve what we're doing.
7. **Evaluate and refine the export centers concept to determine if it can be expanded to cover the United States and to eventually include other services that can work in a service center environment.** As an example, this may include facility inspection/approvals for select agents, biologics, laboratories, and other export facilities. We will explore the challenges presented by certifying animal exports within this center concept.
8. **Develop electronic inspection and certification processes, starting with export products certification including facility approvals.** Use Plant Protection and Quarantine's (PPQ) successful Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance and Tracking System (PCIT) as the basis for a pilot for electronic certification.
9. **Revamp the regulatory framework for user fees to let VS review and restructure fees every year without the requirement for annual rulemaking.** This will allow for more realistic cost recovery.
10. **Identify high-priority IT systems for emergency management and develop and implement plans for their deployment.**
11. **Develop essential emergency management tools** including a Secure Milk Supply Plan, swine euthanasia technology, and a plan for refining and expanding our ability to mobilize non-Federal employees to respond to an emergency by building on the successful National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps concept.
12. **Develop and implement a plan to effectively communicate with employees and stakeholders in the use of a variety of emergency management tools** currently available and under development to enhance our readiness and response capabilities. This plan will follow the overarching VS Communications and Marketing Plan.
13. **Implement a comprehensive, integrated surveillance plan for swine health** that includes multiple surveillance data streams that can be accessed for analysis and decision making, can be turned on and off individually, and may include nontraditional streams.
14. **Prioritize commodity specific surveillance plans and develop a timeline to address them.**
15. **Develop policies and standards to address surveillance data confidentiality and information sharing.** Clearly articulate our roles and authorities for acquiring and sharing new or existing "data streams" and responding and acting on surveillance information.
16. **Leverage the CoreOne product to support an integrated, crossfunctional IT infrastructure for national surveillance information management, analysis, and dissemination.**
17. **Continue to build new collaborations and partnerships in the One Health community while sustaining existing relationships.**
18. **Develop and implement operational, communication, and training plans to integrate One Health initiatives into the daily activities of VS employees.**

These 18 immediate priorities the VSMT is spearheading are only a start to implementing our goals and objectives for 2011 and 2012. The VSMT together with VS employees who develop new ideas for change will establish new priorities for later years.



Employee-led implementation

Two hallmarks of VS2015 continue to be employee leadership and local decision making. Every VS employee must find ways in their daily work to make the goals and objectives in this *New Perspective* actionable. Many resources and opportunities are available for employees to get started.

- ❖ Every supervisor in VS is required to lead discussions with their employees about our goals and objectives. They'll ask for and share ideas for implementing our goals and objectives at the local level.
- ❖ The VS2015 SharePoint site has a link that allows VS employees to submit implementation ideas directly to the VSMT. Employees may submit just a few sentences, or if they have more fully formed ideas, they can use the project templates available on SharePoint at <http://animalhealth/2015>.
- ❖ Employees and external stakeholders may also send ideas to the VS2015 email box. Emails are monitored regularly and will be answered. The email address is VS2015@aphis.usda.gov.
- ❖ The Grassroots Network is ready to accept and process ideas and plans for implementing our goals and objectives. Grassroots leaders will be working to reach out to every VS employee to provide information and get feedback on this document. A list of your local grassroots leaders is available under the "Who Are My Grassroots Leaders" section of the VS2015 SharePoint site at <http://animalhealth/2015>.
- ❖ In response to multiple requests from employees, we're rolling out a new VS2015 Change Management course. The course will provide VS employees with techniques and skills for successfully managing and effecting organizational change. It will also focus on the specific changes described in our *New Perspective*. This self-paced training can accommodate employees without reliable computer or Internet access and will require no travel.

The short-term priorities led by the VSMT are a beginning, not an end. Each VS employee is responsible for change in our organization.

[To submit questions or comments on Section III, click here.](#)



IV.

Pilots, Projects, Accomplishments

Since its beginning, VS2015 has engaged employees and stakeholders to generate ideas and implement pilots and projects to demonstrate how VS can enhance its effectiveness as an animal health organization.

These initiatives reflect new thinking about how to transform our culture, collaborate with partners, build on our core competencies, enhance emergency preparedness, and use new technologies. By the end of 2011, the VSMT will be reviewing reports about each pilot and considering if, and how, the individual pilots should be expanded. Pilots that show clear organizational value will be adopted immediately.

Information about the status of all our VS2015 pilots and projects will be posted on SharePoint and shared by the VSMT and the Grassroots Network. All VS employees will know how our pilots and projects are moving forward, whether they're being expanded, and how they might use the information gleaned from the pilots.

Here are a few notable examples of these VS2015 pilots and other recent efforts in VS that are moving the organization forward.

Projects designed to improve our organizational culture

Exotic pet pilot. VS implemented a pilot project in Florida to evaluate the exotic pet industry as a potential surveillance stream. We located 17 venues where exotic pets are marketed—13 of which were unknown to animal health officials. The pilot showed the value of animal health technicians' gathering observational data for surveillance. They found previously unidentified large exotic animal operations exist near livestock and that members of the exotic animal industry are willing to collaborate with APHIS on animal health issues.

Grassroots Network. A diverse group of employees are serving as a grassroots employee engagement team. Members of the Grassroots Network seek out opportunities to share VS2015 messages. The volunteers collect information from local VS colleagues on VS2015 activities, both proposed and ongoing. The group has already made thousands of contacts with their VS colleagues, sharing and collecting ideas about VS2015. We started less than a year ago with fewer than 175 grassroots volunteers; their numbers have grown substantially since.



Pilot project approach. The design of the VS2015 change effort included an opportunity for VS2015 working groups to design and implement projects to test potential improvements. In early 2011, all VS employees were encouraged to look for ways to improve aspects of their work. Currently, new small-scale pilots can be approved by local managers. The VSMT is gathering information about small-scale projects so they can be tracked and shared. Managers are also encouraged to share their small-scale projects on the VS2015 SharePoint site.

“VMO Observer” pilot. This pilot project moves VS toward maintaining a highly trained, collaborative workforce. The project creates a SharePoint blog-style Web site and weekly summary e-mail distribution for VS personnel involved in disease investigations. The site was launched on February 18, 2011, and employees continue to register and communicate about investigative techniques.

Projects designed to build collaborations and partnerships

Animal disease traceability. On February 5, 2010, the Secretary announced a new course for the Department’s approach to ADT. A Traceability Regulation Working Group of Federal and State representatives and Tribal subject matter experts recommended a new regulatory framework. VS conducted extensive outreach with industry, States, Tribes, and the public to gather input on the framework. The Secretary stated publicly that our approach to the traceability rule established the model for future regulatory development in the Department. It’s a model we’re following as we streamline other regulations.

Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) pilot. VS worked with IDOT and law enforcement officials to check vehicles transporting livestock for animal movement violations when stopped for IDOT compliance inspection. 71 percent of the vehicles stopped were noncompliant and 56 cases were referred for investigation. As part of this pilot, 398 State, Federal, and local personnel were trained to recognize proper movement documentation. Because of this pilot, a swine herd with brucellosis was found and depopulated, and illegal fighting birds were found, confiscated, and tested for avian influenza and exotic Newcastle disease (the test results were negative).

One Health relationships. VS has empowered employees to explore One Health opportunities. Short-term projects have been developed with One Health partners; more are being encouraged. An example partnership includes a 2-week assignment with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) in Minnesota based on drug residue testing and slaughter surveillance that highlighted an opportunity for better traceability of livestock. Another example was a field partnership in Oregon with public health to test birds for West Nile virus.



Salmonella. Due to continuing human salmonellosis outbreaks associated with live poultry from mail-order hatcheries, VS is partnering with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), industry, and State animal and public health agencies to prevent and control *Salmonella* at the hatchery, feed store, and consumer levels. VS' involvement is being coordinated by the pilot VS One Health Coordinating Office.

Swine influenza virus (SIV). In 2008, CDC and VS entered into an interagency agreement to develop a pilot SIV surveillance program. This will help our understanding of the ecology and epidemiology of SIV and improve vaccines, diagnostics, and reagents. SIV surveillance is a collaborative model that may be translated to other emerging pathogens and leverage funding from other government agencies to address One Health issues.

Projects designed to optimize our unique competencies

Preharvest food safety. VS is looking for ways to contribute to preharvest food safety. Specific projects are being explored with FSIS to address *E. coli* and multidrug resistant *Salmonella* before cattle reach slaughter. Planning is underway to conduct on-farm surveillance for levels of *E. coli* in cattle.

One Health coordination pilot. VS created a pilot One Health Coordination Office to coordinate VS One Health activities and be a point of contact for VS personnel and One Health partners. The group began its work in January 2011 and has established multidisciplinary teams of VS personnel to help develop operational, communications, and training plans for One Health.

Veterinary biologics licensing processes. VS issued a memorandum and proposed rule (published January 13, 2011) to update labeling requirements, including those for export products. Additionally, in response to the emerging threat of the novel H1N1 virus in swine, VS and its partners reduced traditional product development and licensing timelines by more than 6 months for H1N1 products, saving the biologics industry hundreds of thousands of dollars in development costs.

Projects designed to enhance readiness and response capabilities

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) response. VS is developing mitigation methods that include improved diagnostic tests, vaccination, depopulation of affected animals, carcass disposal, and disinfection of premises. A VS FMD vaccination policy document will be developed with input from stakeholders in late 2011.



VS Assessment Teams (VSAT) pilot. The VSAT pilot project provides a formal mechanism to respond to, and support requests for, VS expertise, experience, and infrastructure in situations when animals may impact public health, animal health, and/or the environment. VSAT teams are now available. The VSAT concept was used successfully to support an investigation of the Cache Valley virus (a mosquito transmitted virus that can cause fetal abnormalities and abortion in sheep and encephalitis in humans).

Projects designed to enhance our technical infrastructure

Sharing electronic data internationally pilot. VS is evaluating an electronic records system that can provide evidence of animal identification, testing, and certifications for cattle entering the United States from Mexico. This system, developed by Mexico, could speed up border crossings. It's being used at a U.S.-Mexico border crossing in New Mexico and has proven to be comprehensive and easy to use.

Slaughter surveillance automation pilot. This pilot explored ways to make slaughter surveillance sampling more efficient by automating animal selection and data capture by using a collection algorithm loaded on mobile IT devices. The automated process reduced the number of samples collected and costs associated with sample packaging, shipping, and laboratory processing.

Surveillance Collaboration Services. On January 28, 2011, VS announced our contract with TraceFirst Ltd. to use its CoreOne software to address VS' animal health surveillance needs. The implementation of CoreOne within VS is now called Surveillance Collaboration Services (SCS). Since the award, a number of the contract items have been delivered and several significant milestones have been reached.

Tracking imported products pilot. VS assessed current processes for tracking imported trophies processed at approved establishments using information from the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection, PPQ, VS Area Offices, and VS field staff. This assessment will provide observations on current practices and recommendations for VS as it improves and expands tracking and certification services.

[To submit questions or comments on Section IV, click here.](#)



V.

Supporting Documents

Here are SharePoint links and external Web links to several documents that support this *New Perspective*:

<p>One Health</p>	<p>http://animalhealth/2015/Shared%20Documents/onehealth_final.pdf</p> <p>http://www.aphis.usda.gov/about_aphis/programs_offices/veterinary_services/downloads/vs2015/one_health_final.pdf</p>
<p>Surveillance for Action</p>	<p>http://animalhealth/2015/Shared%20Documents/surveillance_final.pdf</p> <p>http://www.aphis.usda.gov/about_aphis/programs_offices/veterinary_services/downloads/vs2015/surveillance_final.pdf</p>
<p>Movement and Marketability</p>	<p>http://animalhealth/2015/Shared%20Documents/mandm_final.pdf</p> <p>http://www.aphis.usda.gov/about_aphis/programs_offices/veterinary_services/downloads/vs2015/mandm_final.pdf</p>
<p>Agricultural Emergency Management Preparedness and Response Planning</p>	<p>http://animalhealth/2015/Shared%20Documents/aemprep_final.pdf</p> <p>http://www.aphis.usda.gov/about_aphis/programs_offices/veterinary_services/downloads/vs2015/aemprep_final.pdf</p>
<p>Regulatory Streamlining</p>	<p>http://animalhealth/2015/Shared%20Documents/reg_final.pdf</p> <p>http://www.aphis.usda.gov/about_aphis/programs_offices/veterinary_services/downloads/vs2015/reg_final.pdf</p>
<p>VS Communications and Marketing Plan</p>	<p>http://animalhealth/2015/Shared%20Documents/vscandm_plan.pdf</p>
<p>Preliminary Action Plans for VSMT Priorities, FY11-12</p>	<p>http://animalhealth/2015/Shared%20Documents/vsmt_fy11_12_priorities.pdf</p>

[To submit general questions or comments, click here.](#)