



USAHA News Release

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For immediate release:

COMMITTEE CALLS FOR ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR STATE ANIMAL EMERGENCY MEASURES

Reno, Nev., Oct. 22, 2007 – Adequate funding for development of animal emergency activities at the state level is essential to ensure effective response to an outbreak of a foreign animal disease or a natural disaster such as a flood, fire or earthquake.

This point was emphasized at the meeting of the joint U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA) and American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) Committee on Animal Emergency Management here this week. It was noted that although state animal health agencies play a key role in responding to animal emergencies, the current level of funding for emergency management planning and response capability varies between states and in many cases is not adequate to ensure an effective animal emergency management system.

The committee called for a comprehensive effort by government and industry to create a system of funding that will provide the resources necessary for state animal health agencies to reach the level needed to protect their livestock industries from disease outbreaks and other hazards.

Updates on animal emergency management were presented to the committee by representatives from both the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Homeland Security. The committee also heard an update on the National Veterinary Stockpile. This stockpile, which is continuing to be developed and expanded, consists of equipment and vaccines against the most serious animal diseases that could be distributed within 24 hours after declaration of a federal animal disease emergency.

The committee also was provided with an overview of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) test exercises that have been conducted over the past seven years. The reports focused on lessons learned and key areas that need improvement vis-à-vis emergency management.

A presentation was made concerning effective legislative actions in the areas of animal emergency management, including the National Agriculture and Food Defense Act. Finally, the committee recommended that carcass and product disposal and decontamination be addressed by the Food and Agriculture Government Coordinating Council in 2008.

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