



USAHA News Release

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For immediate release:

VIRGINIA TECH VETERINARIAN RECEIVES APHIS ANIMAL HEALTH AWARD

Reno, Nev., Oct. 21, 2007 -- Dr. Francois Elvinger, professor of veterinary epidemiology at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, was presented with the APHIS Animal Health Award by Cindy Smith, Administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The presentation was made during the opening joint general session of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) in Reno.

In presenting the award, Smith noted that Elvinger's contributions to animal health improvement in the United States are focused on information management, animal disease surveillance and the appropriate responses to the identification of disease. In 1995 he coordinated a workshop titled "Identification and Consolidation of Existing Data Sources and Standardization of Disease Definitions and Reporting." Smith pointed out that this workshop was the genesis of the U.S. National Animal Disease Reporting System or NAHRS.

"NAHRS is a joint effort of USAHA, AAVLD and APHIS," Smith said. It was designed to provide data from state animal health officials on the presence of reportable diseases in commercial livestock, poultry and aquaculture species. It is intended to be one part of a comprehensive and integrated animal health system.

"NAHRS has become invaluable in APHIS' ability to accurately report the status of animal health in the United States," Smith said. Elvinger has served as the co-chair of the NAHRS steering committee from 1998 to the present.

He also serves as co-chair of the AAVLD Epidemiology Committee and the joint USAHA-AAVLD Committee on Animal Health Information Systems. Since its inception in 2004, Elvinger also has served as chair of the National Animal Health Surveillance Steering Committee. This committee represents stakeholders and includes representatives from livestock and poultry industries, state animal agencies, diagnostic laboratory organizations, academic institutions, private practitioner organizations and relevant federal agencies.

Smith noted that this steering committee is charged with guiding APHIS' National Surveillance Unit in the design, planning and implementation of efficient and accurate surveillance for relevant animal diseases. "It is in this capacity the Dr. Elvinger's leadership,

vision and passion for making things right has most benefited U.S. animal health in the twenty-first century,” Smith said.

Elvinger holds a veterinary degree from the Hanover Veterinary School in Hanover, Germany, and a PhD from the University of Florida’s Department of Dairy Science. He has a diploma from the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine and also the European College of Veterinary Public Health. He is a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, AAVLD, the Association of Teachers of Veterinary Public Health and Preventive Medicine, USAHA, and the European Society of Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine.

Smith said candidates for the APHIS Animal Health Award -- also known as the APHIS Administrator’s Award -- must demonstrate their support for APHIS, its programs and animal health through various avenues including research, development of regulations, strategic planning and program review.

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