

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOOD SAFETY

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The Committee met on October 24, 2004, from 12:30 pm to 6:00 pm. Chair David Glauer presided over the meeting and in the absence of Vice Chair Bonnie Buntain, was assisted by Dr. John Ragan. Dr. John Ragan is the National Livestock Program Leader, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) Animal Production Food Safety (APFS). Approximately 60 committee members and guests were welcomed to the annual meeting.

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The first discussion item of discussion was entitled "The Real Story on BSE." USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Administrator Dr. Ron DeHaven, Deputy Assistant Administrator Office of Field Operations, USDA-FSIS Dr. Kenneth Peterson, and Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Office of Surveillance and Compliance Director Dr. Dan McChesney participated.

Dr. DeHaven reviewed the firewalls that were in place prior to the announcement on December 23, 2003, of the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) positive cow in the state of Washington and the United States response that followed, including the banning of non-ambulatory cattle from slaughter and the removal of specified risk material (SRM) from human food. Enhanced surveillance is proceeding at a pace to collect 268,000 samples in a continuous 12 month period. This testing is for the purposes of detecting BSE, if present, and the prevalence if BSE is detected in cattle in the United States. The test is not for the purpose of food safety. Seventy million dollars have been made available to the USDA for conducting the enhanced surveillance.

Domestic confidence in beef meat product has remained high, but international trade reflects a 3.3 billion dollars net loss. Japan and the United States have concluded negotiations that may open trade following relevant rule making. Bovine animals included in the Beef Export Verification Program for Japan must be traceable to live animal production records for age verification.

Dr. Peterson also commented on the high consumer confidence. He stated that good animal health leads good public health. The December 23, 2003, announcement heightened the multi-agency relationship between APHIS, FDA and FSIS. The banning of non-ambulatory cattle from slaughter is an example of the cooperation. Also, a change in policy permits FSIS to collect surveillance samples for BSE. Additional FSIS interim rules including the test and hold procedure, prohibition of SRM from the human food chain, prohibition of Advanced Meat Recovery processes and air injection stunning were discussed. Dr. Peterson indicated that the removal of SRM was the single most important step in the protection of public health.

Dr. McChesney updated the committee on the status of compliance for the "Feed Ban Rule." Compliance exceeds 99 percent. The number of firms that handle prohibited material for processing feed has dropped from approximately 1300 in 1997 to approximately 900 in 2004. Knowledge of the BSE agent has changed since 1997. Once it was believed that the infective dose for cattle was one gram of infected brain material. Now the infective dose is believed to be 0.01 grams or possibly as little as 0.001 grams of infected brain material. In addition, Dr. McChesney discussed the advanced notice of proposed rule-making (ANPR) that includes banning blood and blood products, plate

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waste, and the feeding of poultry litter. In addition, the ANPR requires the use of dedicated production lines and strengthening of the feed ban. If the feed ban were strengthened to prohibit SRM from all feed, an additional 13.3 billion pounds of material from slaughter would need to be disposed of at a substantial cost and an impact on the environment.

Dr. John Dunn, Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer, Foodborne and Diarrheal Diseases Branch, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) presented "Antibiotic Resistance in Foodborne Pathogens: Consequences, Sources and Solutions." Dr. Dunn reported on data that demonstrated how the increase in antimicrobial resistance is dangerous for public health. This may be due to the inappropriate use of antibiotics in both human and veterinary medicine. There is an increasing amount of international knowledge of treatment failures and the resultant human health consequences attributed to animals. Dr. Dunn stated that the use of antibiotics in animals is estimated at 25 million pounds compared to less than 5 million pounds in human medicine. Resistance to fluoroquinolones, third generation cephalosporins, ciprofloxacin and nalidixic acid were cited as examples. Dr. Dunn discussed the complex genetic mechanisms that influences virulence, and the effect selective pressure has on the development of antimicrobial resistance.

Dr. David Reeves, Associate Professor Large Animal Medicine, University of Georgia presented "The Rationale for the Effects of Changing Antimicrobial Regulations on Food Animal Production and Practice." Dr. Reeves demonstrated through a series of data collection from farms that do not use antimicrobials and those that use them therapeutically, and therapeutically and for growth promotion have little effect on the development of antimicrobial resistance. Other factors such as stress, movement, and time of collection have significant effect upon the development of resistance. In addition, the effect short and long term use has on the development of antimicrobial resistance is dependent upon the antimicrobial product itself. The relationship of antimicrobial resistance in humans attributed to animals can not be determined at this time.

Mr. Albert Chambers, Coordinator of the Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Working Group presented "The Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Program." Mr. Chambers discussed an aggressive proactive Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 22000 pre- and post-farm gate food safety program. He described a comprehensive plan for food safety status certification at the farm level of essentially all food commodities. The program represents an unprecedented collaboration of government and industry in assuring the safety of all food commodities. He indicated that the Canadian producers, including livestock, poultry, horti-

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culture and aquaculture, are seeking this type of program due to their concern for food safety.

Mr. James Riva, Branch Chief, Audit, Review and Compliance Branch Livestock and Seed Program, Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) presented "AMS Quality Systems and Assessment Programs." Mr. Riva clearly described AMS auditing as a verifier of a process and not product quality. Examples of verifying a process would include organic certification, export verification programs and certified products. The auditors employed in this branch are ISO 9000 trained.

Dr. David Pyburn, National Trichinae Coordinator, USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services (VS) presented "Animal Health and Zoonoses Certification Programs." Dr. Pyburn discussed the voluntary certification programs available from APHIS, Veterinary Services including: the Scrapie Flock Certification Program, the Voluntary Bovine Johne's Disease Control Program, the National Poultry Improvement Plan, and the National Trichinae Certification Program. These programs are producer driven to establish a level of confidence in the health and food safety status of livestock and poultry encompassed in these programs.

Dr. Barbara Glenn, Director, Animal Biotechnology, Food, and Agriculture Section Biotechnology Industry Organization presented "Biotechnology and Food Safety." Dr. Glenn discussed biotechnology in the areas of genomics, cloning and transgenics. These are processes used to develop improved animal traits and products of animal, including drugs. Genomics does not present a food safety issue. However, cloned and transgenic animals have not received food safety clearance from FDA. Dr. Glenn indicated that this may take eight to ten years. Public opinion is variable depending upon their knowledge base, but cloned and transgenic animals do not have a high approval rating at this time.

The mission statement of the Committee was reviewed. No revisions were recommended.

Three resolutions were approved and forwarded to the Committee on Nominations and Resolutions for approval by the general membership. They addressed:

1. Re-affirmation of 2003 resolution number 10 on Collaboration in Animal Health, Food Safety and Epidemiology (CAFHSE).
2. Support for the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD) and the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS).
3. Requesting USDA-APHIS-VS Center for Veterinary Biologics to assume the oversight for approval and licensing of vaccines that have a benefit in reducing food safety risks.