

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 52 **APPROVED**

SOURCE: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SUBJECT MATTER: URGENCY OF PROGRAM COMPLETION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

We are blessed with a great infrastructure for animal health and production in our country and enjoy an abundance of quality, safe animal protein products and the livestock that produces those products. Too many times, and with increasing frequency, we find ourselves urgently going to Congress and State legislatures to seek emergency assistance for control of diseases that have been nearly eradicated from the United States through prudent cooperative federal, state and industry animal health and disease control programs. This sporadic response to animal health issues will inevitably lead to a crisis. Today, some states total animal health budgets are less in actual dollars than they were fifty years ago for specific diseases.

Of greater importance is the failure of the national system to safeguard animal health. Congress fails to recognize the importance of implementing a multi-year core funding for animal disease programs and fails to timely enact annual budgets, thus placing disease control programs in jeopardy due to the intermittency and uncertainty of even marginal funding.

If this issue is not addressed soon by responsible people in industry, federal and state governments, we will be negligent in our responsibilities to the American public in protecting this vital part of our food system infrastructure. Re-emergence and exacerbation of diseases such as tuberculosis, brucellosis, cattle tick fever and equally threatening intentional or unintentional introduction of a highly contagious foreign disease affecting both animal and public health present real and inevitable risk.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), cooperating with state animal health agencies and industry, has done, truly, a commendable job of safeguarding our livestock industry with the limited resources provided. However, success in controlling diseases has led to complacency while freedom of disease has created larger, yet more susceptible populations, and globalization of people, products and animals has created a whole new world for animal health safeguarding. Our disease control programs must be finalized.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to continually support and advocate for the ongoing support, both program wise and financially, by the Secretary of Agriculture, the United States Congress and the President of the United States. Resources must be available, in adequate amounts and in timely manners, to finish disease control programs. The USAHA urges USDA to establish priorities, within budgetary functions, to bring existing programs and goals to finalization. We also urge USDA to adequately support initiatives to safeguard our livestock industries.

RESPONSE:**USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) appreciates the United States Animal Health Association's concerns. VS has made strategic and budgetary planning a priority for all programs. We anticipate that many programs will be reviewed by the new administration, and business planning allows us to articulate clear goals and justify budget requests. In addition, VS is undertaking long-term planning as part of its "VS in 2015" initiative to determine how VS' mission and role must evolve to meet the animal health challenges of the 21st century.