



United States Department of Agriculture

Research, Education, and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

December 1, 2011

Mr. David T. Marshall
President
United States Animal Health Association
4221 Mitchell Avenue
St. Joseph, Missouri 64507

Dear Mr. Marshall:

Thank you for your letter of November 8, 2011, and for including the "Identification of Farm Environmental Parameters Hostile to *Salmonella*" resolution, which was passed by the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) during its 115th annual meeting. I appreciate hearing from you.

I believe the goals of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and USAHA area are similar in many respects. For example, two ARS programs—the National Food Safety Program and the Animal Health Program—have as part of their broader goals the assessment of *Salmonella* multiplication and transmission from animal to animal, from animals to plants, and of course, from food sources to humans.

The goal of ARS' National Food Safety Program is to conduct the types of research that will ensure that America's food supply is safe for consumers by seeking ways to assess, control, and eliminate potentially harmful food contaminants both in the plant and animal food chains. ARS currently conducts food safety research at 16 laboratories around the Nation. Several of these locations specifically address *Salmonella* in animal systems: ARS' Meat Safety and Quality Research Unit in Clay Center, Nebraska, conducts research on beef cattle; the Southern Plains Agricultural Research Center in College Station, Texas, conducts research on livestock and poultry; the National Animal Disease Center in Ames, Iowa, conducts research on swine; and the Richard B. Russell Research Center in Athens, Georgia, conducts research on poultry and eggs.

Similarly, one of the primary goals of ARS' Animal Health Program is to protect and ensure the safety of the Nation's agriculture and food supply through better disease detection, prevention, control, and treatment practices. Part of the work of the program involves examining ways to reduce the risk of *Salmonella* infection in meat and poultry products.



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Through these national-scale programs, you can be assured that we at ARS are continually striving to understand the mechanisms of *Salmonella* transmission and to develop the scientific information and tools to prevent infection. We are also working closely with various Federal regulatory agencies to turn the most promising and applicable results of our research into guidelines and regulations that members of the agricultural community—such as USAHA members—can readily follow and apply to their production systems. As you might guess, however, unraveling these mysteries and establishing proper guidelines and regulations both take time.

I applaud the USAHA for calling on ARS to establish project teams for the purpose of identifying cost-effective ways to suppress *Salmonella* multiplication in the food animal environment. My hope is that members of USAHA will continue to support our efforts at ARS to better understand the mechanism of *Salmonella* multiplication in farming systems.

Again, thank you for writing to me. I appreciate your interest and support for ARS research, and value the benefit of USAHA's input as we make decisions on future research endeavors.

Sincerely,



for EDWARD B. KNIPLING
Administrator