

June 19, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy, and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Animal Agriculture Coalition (AAC), representing veterinary medicine, animal science, state agricultural leaders, and various livestock or animal agricultural interests in the U.S., we applaud lawmakers' ongoing attention to the challenges COVID-19 has inflicted on the nation's animal agriculture community. **As Congress continues deliberations, we urge you to provide \$300 million for the 2018 Farm Bill animal disease prevention and management fund to support improved animal health surveillance and laboratory capacity in the current public health emergency and to ensure preparedness for future infectious disease outbreaks through the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program (NADPRP), and the National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Vaccine Bank.**

As we reflect on how to prepare for and respond to outbreaks like COVID, it's clear that the nation must adopt a coordinated one health approach to prepare and respond to zoonotic disease outbreaks. Recognizing that animal, human, and environmental health are inextricably linked, animal health surveillance plays a critical role in protecting our nation's food supply and public health from infectious disease outbreaks that originate in animals. The USDA animal health infrastructure, authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, includes the NAHLN, NADPRP, and the National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Vaccine Bank is the nation's defense against emerging and re-emerging food animal diseases that threaten economic stability and human lives.

Beyond the importance to animal agriculture, in several states, NAHLN laboratories have stepped up to support public health colleagues in testing human samples for COVID-19. Funding is needed for these laboratories to maintain diagnostics and surveillance of foreign animal disease (FAD), while supplementing the costs associated with their role in supporting COVID-19 human testing capacity in light of the incredible demand for testing.

The animal agriculture industry is constantly faced with the threats of emerging and re-emerging zoonotic diseases that threaten the U.S. food and feed supply. While the focus is on COVID-19 in human populations, the threat of a FADs on the billions of animals in this country would be

catastrophic. Investments in these programs are needed today to ensure the nation has an adequate animal health infrastructure.

AAC recommends that Congress include \$300 million for the 2018 Farm Bill Animal Health Provisions program to bolster routine surveillance and preparedness for FADs, while supplementing the costs associated with the surge capacity to respond to COVID-19.

In these challenging times, our nation can leverage animal health infrastructure through a coordinated one health approach to support the COVID-19 pandemic response while also ensuring the safety of the country's food and feed supply.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to discuss the AAC's recommendations further, please contact Andrew Bailey, AAC Chair, at baileya@nppc.org, or Lauren Broccoli, AAC Vice Chair, at lbroccoli@avma.org.

CC:

The Honorable Colin Peterson, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee

The Honorable Mike Conaway, Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committee

The Honorable Pat Roberts, Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture Committee

On behalf of:

AAC Commodity Members

American Dairy Goat
Association

American Horse Council

American Rabbit Breeders
Association, Inc.

American Sheep Industry

Association
National Cattlemen’s Beef
Association
National Milk Producers
Federation

National Pork Producers
Council
National Turkey Federation
United Egg Producers

AAC Allied Animal Agriculture Members

American Association of
Avian Pathologists

American Association of
Bovine Practitioners

American Association of
Mycobacterial Diseases

American Association of Swine
Veterinarians

American Association of
Veterinary Laboratory
Diagnosticians

American Dairy Science
Association

American Feed Industry
Association

American Society of Animal
Science

American Veterinary Medical
Association

Animal Health Institute

Association of American
Veterinary Medical Colleges

Biotechnology Innovation
Organization

FASS

Mycobacterial Diseases of
Animals – Multistate
Initiative

National Association for the
Advancement of Animal
Science

National Assembly of State
Animal Health Officials

National Association of State
Departments of Agriculture
National Dairy Herd Information
Association
National Grain and Feed
Association
National Institute for Animal
Agriculture
U.S. Animal Health
Association
US Dairy Forage Research
Center Stakeholder
Committee