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American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians E-Newsletter

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Issue: # 2-13

February 2013

AAVLD Takes Capitol Hill !!

Your AAVLD association leaders recently went to Washington D.C. to educate lawmakers and federal regulators on the importance of animal disease diagnostics and surveillance systems - and to ask for their support for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN)!

During the week of February 25, your AAVLD leadership spent two full days attending one on one meetings with representatives of ten federal agencies / groups having responsibilities relating to animal diseases. Following these two days of federal agency meetings, your AAVLD leadership met with nearly 50 Representatives and Senators or their key staff.

The response to AAVLD's efforts was exciting. Every person that was part of a meeting was at some level aware of the role of animal disease surveillance in maintaining our agricultural and export related markets as well as in the safety of our food delivery systems.

Everyone in meetings also acknowledged awareness of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) and its important role in food safety, agricultural exports and bioterrorism defense.

Barely more than a couple of years ago, the funding for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network was eliminated - largely due to Congressional leaders lacking an understanding of the value of the program. Thanks to the efforts of AAVLD leaders, funding has been restored and every single person that AAVLD met with was supportive of the NAHLN and acknowledged the importance of increasing funding to support enhanced disease surveillance capacity.

AAVLD will continue to increase awareness of veterinary laboratory

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diagnostics and diagnosticians with our government leaders as well as the public at large.

Thank you AAVLD leaders.

Jim Kistler, IOM, CAE
Executive Director

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack: World Organization for Animal Health Recommends United States' BSE Risk Status Be Upgraded

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20, 2013

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack made the following statement about notification received today from the Scientific Commission for the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) recommending that the United States' risk classification for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) be upgraded to negligible risk:

"I am very pleased with this decision and recommendation by the OIE's Scientific Commission. This is a significant achievement for the United States, American beef producers and businesses, and federal and state partners who work in coordination to maintain a system of three interlocking safeguards against BSE that protect our public and animal health. Being classified as negligible risk for BSE by the OIE will also greatly support our efforts to increase exports of U.S. beef and beef products. In recommending that the United States receive negligible risk classification, the Commission stated that the risk assessments submitted for their evaluation were robust and comprehensive, and that both our surveillance for, and safeguards against, BSE are strong. U.S. beef and beef products are of the highest quality, wholesome and produced to the highest safety standards in the world. The United States continues to press for normalization of beef trade with several nations in a manner that is based on science and consistent with international standards. U.S. food and agricultural exporters and consumers worldwide benefit when countries adopt international standards."

BACKGROUND

Last year, the United States submitted an application and supporting information to the OIE's Scientific Commission to upgrade the United States' risk classification from controlled to negligible. The Commission, in turn, conducted a thorough review before recommending that the risk classification for the United States be upgraded to negligible. Before the OIE's annual General Assembly meeting in Paris, France, in May 2013, delegate countries will have the opportunity to review the Commission's recommendation. The United States expects that formal adoption of negligible risk status for the United States will occur at the General Assembly meeting in May, when it is considered.

The OIE determines a country's risk status based on actions the country has taken to manage the risk of the disease. These actions include instituting a strong ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban, strictly controlling imports of animals and animal products from countries at

risk for the disease, and conducting appropriate surveillance.

The OIE Code, which is based on the latest science and current knowledge concerning BSE, provides guidelines for the safe trade of animals and products based on the country's risk status and the risk presented by the specific item being traded. Negligible risk is the lowest risk level under the OIE Code. Countries defined as negligible risk have conducted extensive surveillance and testing in domestic cattle to demonstrate a minimal risk for BSE.

The OIE administers and governs the foundational international standards on animal health as well as trade in livestock and animal products. With a total of 178 Member Countries, including the United States, the OIE is recognized as a reference organization by the World Trade Organization (WTO), the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. The official recognition of disease status by OIE of Member Countries is of great significance for international trade and constitutes one of the most important links between the OIE and WTO.

The United States has a longstanding system of three interlocking safeguards against BSE that protects public and animal health in the United States, the most important of which is the removal of specified risk materials from all animals presented for slaughter. The second safeguard is a strong feed ban that protects cattle from the disease. The third safeguard is our ongoing BSE surveillance program that allows USDA to detect the disease if it exists at very low levels in the U.S. cattle population.

Nature's Variety, Kasel recall pet treats and food

Two companies announced separate recalls on Wednesday of pet food and dog treats.

By Lynne Terry, The Oregonian
on February 20, 2013 at 12:20 PM, updated February 20, 2013 at 3:52 PM

Kasel Associated Industries is pulling a wide variety of dog treats over salmonella contamination. The recall covers a wide variety of treats, from chicken jerky to pig ears to hearts of lamb, produced in its plant in Denver between April and October last year. The items were sold in Target, Costco, Sam's Club and through its website.

A Kasel official said the Colorado Department of Agriculture found salmonella in its chicken jerky, prompting a recall of that product in September. The Food and Drug Administration investigated, urging the company to issue the wider recall.

Nature's Variety announced its own recall of raw organic chicken for cats and dogs after receiving a complaint by a customer that pieces of plastic were in a bag. The company, which manufactures in Lincoln, Neb. but sells nationwide, said it found and fixed the problem.

The chicken was sold nationwide in bags and cases with a best-by date of Oct. 4, 2013.

For more information about the Nature's Variety recall, call 888-519-7387. Kasel Associated Industries consumer line is 800-218-4417.

NBAF research laboratory tangled in federal budget battle

By Tim Carpenter
The Topeka Capital-Journal
February 17, 2013

WASHINGTON - Partisan rancor between Congress and the Obama administration about broad outlines of the federal budget place at a crossroads the proposed \$1 billion livestock research laboratory earmarked for Kansas State University.

A lurching series of cautionary and reversible steps have been taken toward creation of the National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility since Manhattan was selected as site of the top-secret lab in December 2008.

Trepidation at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security about releasing money earmarked for federal research and development, fueled at the moment by a controversial law initiating across-the-board cuts March 1, led the agency to padlock \$40 million for a power plant and \$50 million for construction at NBAF. Second-guessing of Homeland Security's decision to locate the lab in the middle of the nation's cattle belt led to supplemental assessments that appear to have satisfied most critics.

"The problem is we're in very dire straits in regards to the funding for everything," said U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, who raised an alarm about animal disease security more than 10 years ago. "We've been able to secure enough funding year by year to keep it going."

In a series of interviews, the entire Kansas congressional delegation expressed confidence a facility dedicated to studying the planet's most exotic viruses would open in Manhattan.

These Republicans agreed Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano was obligated to release all money previously set aside for the project. They believe a national security argument could be made for Democratic President Barack Obama to insert new appropriations for NBAF in his upcoming budget request to Congress.

AAVLD Conducts Audit Training

Large Group of New Auditors Attends Training

AAVLD conducted two days of training for both existing and new members of the accreditation audit pool and accreditation committee members from February 12th - 13th.



The Accreditation Committee is charged with managing the accreditation of AAVLD approved laboratories - and the audit pool is made up of volunteer AAVLD members who utilize their expertise to review and accredit labs seeking recognition.

Nearly 30 people attended the two days of training, conducted in part by the internationally recognized laboratory accrediting body A2LA.

If you have an interest in serving as a member of the audit pool or simply want more information about accreditation, please email [Reda Ozuna](mailto:Reda.Ozuna).

Watch Out! - The 2013 AAVLD Annual Conference Will Be in San Diego

The 2013 AAVLD Annual Conference and Scientific Symposia will be October 17-23, 2013. The meeting will be in San Diego CA:

**Town and Country Hotel
500 Hotel Circle North
San Diego, CA. 92108**

Join AAVLD as we partner with the U.S. Animal Health Association to bring exciting pre-conference and conference scientific presentations to keep you up-to-date on the latest animal health information.

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We value your opinion and contributions. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions for articles, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Kistler
Executive Director
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians

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