From: jkistler@aavld.org on behalf of American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
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American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
E-Newsletter

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Congress Passes Dedicated NAHLN Funding

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Issue: # 1(1)-14 **February 2014**

FARM BILLS PASSES and INCLUDES FUNDING for NAHLN

In a key victory for AAVLD and its members, Congress has passed a new five year Farm Bill and sent it to President Obama for his signature. The bill contains language creating a dedicated funding mechanism for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN).

After watching NAHLN funding eliminated a few short years ago, AAVLD leadership engaged with members of Congress to not only restore NAHLN funding, but actually create a standing authorization for financial support (subject to annual appropriations.)

By creating a statutory framework for funding the NAHLN, Congress will now be required to consider the level of funding for NAHLN on an annual basis during the appropriations process. The new law suggests that Congress provide up to $15 million annually dedicated to supporting the NAHLN. Congress retains the authority to determine the actual amount of money dedicated to NAHLN each year, but the new law provides a much stronger foundation for that funding than has existed previously.

While AAVLD led the charge to create this dedicated funding mechanism, we would like to recognize the efforts of our other partners who supported this effort, including individual AAVLD members, AAVLD member laboratories, the NAHLN, USAHA, AVMA, the Animal Agriculture Coalition and many other allied organizations.

Sandra Bushmich,
Northeast Rep.

Lanny Pace,
Southeast Rep.

Pat Halbur,
Northcentral Rep.

Hemant Naikare,
Southcentral Rep.

Jerry Heidel,
Northwest Rep.

Hana Van Campen
Southwest Rep.

Estela Cornaglia,
Canada Provincial Rep.

Maria Perrone,
Canada Federal Ex-Officio

Beth Lautner,
NVSL Ex-Officio

Christine Hoang,
AVMA Ex-Officio

For text of the entire bill, use the following link:
http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20140127/CRPT-113hrpt-HR2642.pdf

The article below from the AVMA outlines the veterinary interests contained in the 959 page legislation:

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Overdue farm bill set to finally become law

Massive legislation will authorize some but not all items on AVMA's legislative agenda.

Feb. 4, 2014
DVM360 Magazine

The 959-page, $956 billion farm bill is on its way to President Obama's desk. The U.S. Senate passed it today 68 to 32, helped along with often rare bipartisan support.

The overdue bill-its predecessor expired in 2012-passed the House last week with a vote of 251 to 166. Fully expected to be signed by the president, the soon to be law will cut food stamps by $8 billion, farm subsidy and commodity programs by $14 billion, and conservation programs by $4 billion. However, several programs affecting veterinary medicine-specifically those lobbied for by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)-will be granted funding in the massive piece of legislation.

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture often refers to the Farm Bill as the 'Food, Farm and Jobs Bill,' but here at the AVMA, we'd like to add that it's a bill for animals too, because of its far-reaching impact on the work that veterinarians do every day to protect their health and welfare," Ron DeHaven, DVM, AVMA's executive vice president and chief executive officer, says in a release.

"For several years now, the AVMA has urged policymakers to respond to the critical need for more agricultural research that supports advancements in animal health, production and products. We are pleased that Congress answered that call by passing a bipartisan bill that gives veterinarians and scientists the resources they need to continue providing the best veterinary care to animals, guarding our nation against diseases that impact animal and public health, advancing science and keeping America's food supply safe and affordable," he says.

Most notably, the farm bill includes authorization of the Veterinary Services Grant Program, a modified Animal Health and Disease Research/1433 Formula Funds program, and funding for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network. Other programs supported by the AVMA were reauthorized, as was the animal fighting provision listed as the Animal Fighting Spectator Prohibition Act on the latest AVMA legislative agenda. Notably absent was the Veterinary Medicine Mobility Act, which many hoped would be attached to the farm bill. It will now wait its turn for a vote in the House, having passed the Senate Jan. 8.

Here are items of veterinary interest in the farm bill:

Veterinary Services Grant Program.
This new program will receive $10 million annually to relieve veterinary shortage situations, support private veterinary practices engaged in public health activities and support practices of veterinarians who are participating in or have successfully completed a Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program contract or similar state program. The bill is meant to complement the existing Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, which provides student debt forgiveness for veterinarians willing to work in rural shortage areas. The AVMA proposed the legislation and has worked for its passage since 2008.

National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) funding.
The farm bill authorizes $15 million for the NAHLN, a network of federal, university and state veterinary diagnostic labs. The NAHLN is designed to help establish a surveillance and emergency response system that provides resources for surveillance testing, information management, quality assurance and the development and validation of new diagnostic tests. The funding supports the network's early warning system so that veterinarians and scientists can quickly detect emerging and foreign zoonotic diseases before they impact animal or public health or the food supply.

Animal Health and Disease Research/1433 Formula Funds program.
Referred to as the Farm Animal Integrated Research Initiative, this expanded program in the farm bill supports animal agriculture research, including a competitive grants program with a broader scope to include three focal areas of food security, One Health and stewardship. The program will be funded with $25 million.

Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research.
This would provide $200 million in funding for new research projects aimed at addressing key problems of national and international significance, including knowledge gaps in animal and plant health, food production and products, food safety, and nutrition and health, to name a few.

Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD).
Up to $2.5 million will be reauthorized annually for FARAD, which gives scientists the tools they need to provide vital information to veterinarians and livestock producers to ensure that milk, meat and eggs are free of drug and chemical residues before entering the food supply.

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI).
The AFRI provides grants for research, education and extension work into sustaining all components of U.S. agriculture. The farm bill reauthorized up to $700 million annually for the program which will include new priority areas for research, including: the study and development of surveillance methods; vaccines, vaccination delivery systems and diagnostics for pests and diseases, including epizootic diseases in domestic livestock; zoonotic diseases in domestic livestock or wildlife reservoirs that present potential public health concerns; the identification of animal drug needs; and the generation and dissemination of data for the safe and effective therapeutic uses of animal drugs for minor species (such as sheep, goats, rabbits, guinea pigs, zoo animals, fish and shellfish, etc.) and minor uses in major species (i.e. dogs, cats, horses, cattle, swine, chickens and turkeys).

Animal Fighting Spectator Prohibition Act of 2013.
In addition to food research and food safety programs, the animal fighting legislation cracks down on the abusive practice of animal fighting by making it a federal crime to attend, or cause a minor under the age of 16 to attend, these

cruel events. Targeting those who participate in animal fights is essential to putting organizers out of business. The farm bill allocates $756 billion to food stamps and nutrition, $89.8 billion to crop insurance, $56 billion to conservation and $44.4 billion to commodity programs, leaving $8.2 billion for everything that does not fall into those categories. For more information on the legislative issues the AVMA will continue to pursue in 2014, go to dvm360.com.

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Sincerely,

Jim Kistler
Executive Director
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians

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