

Swine HEALTH REPORT

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Fall 2003

U.S. Animal Health Association Accepts Animal Identification Plan

At its 107th Annual Meeting in October, the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) endorsed a plan to implement a national system for animal identification as a work in progress.

The U.S. Animal Identification Plan (USAIP), as it is called, defines the standards and framework for implementing a phased-in national food animal and livestock identification program. It was refined over the past year by 95 individuals representing 70 industry groups as well as state and federal animal health officials working collectively as the National Animal Identification Development Team.

"We are pleased with the action of the USAHA," said Robert Fourdraine, co-chair of the National Animal ID Steering Committee. "With USAHA's acceptance, the next steps of finalizing the Plan may be taken. Specifically, comments on the USAIP are needed from individuals or groups within the animal agriculture industry and government so the Development Team may address suggestions and concerns as implementation plans are being developed."

"The goal with this national plan is to adopt national standards that will allow rapid trace-back of foreign animal diseases in U.S. livestock and poultry."

DR. MARK ENGLE
NATIONAL PORK BOARD

In addition to the comment period, Species Working Groups are being formed to advance the USAIP through development of more precise details of transition, implementation, and continuity within a timeframe consistent with the goals of the Plan.

"Recognizing the differences in how various species are raised and marketed, these working groups will be vital in developing the



needed steps necessary to transition into a national identification system within the overall standards of the USAIP," said Fourdraine.

The primary focus of the U.S. Animal Identification Plan is to protect animal agriculture through safeguarding of animal health. The plan is the result of the collaboration of more than 70 organizations, including states, industry, USDA, the USAHA committee on livestock identification and the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA).

The foundation of the identification plan is a national premises ID system, which is expected to be implemented by July 2004. The development of a premises ID system involves the assignment of a nationally unique number to livestock operation sites.

Dr. Mark Engle, director of swine health programs for the National Pork Board, also serves on the steering committee and chairs the National Institute for Animal Agriculture's (NIAA) Animal Identification and Information Systems Committee. Engle has led a

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USDA Amends Inspection Requirements for Swine Finishing Herds

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is amending regulations pertaining to the interstate movement of swine. The amended regulations limit the requirement for mandatory veterinary inspections, at intervals of 30 days or less, to swine that are or will be in the process of moving interstate within a swine production system and also to the premises on which the

swine are to be housed.

With this change, swine that have arrived at a finishing house or other final destination within the system would no longer be required to undergo veterinary inspections at intervals of 30 days or less. In order to ensure that finishing house animals will still undergo regular health monitoring, swine that have completed their movement within the system, as well as the premises on which

they are housed, will have to be inspected in accordance with existing regulations for the state of destination.

It is expected that this final rule will reduce the frequency of veterinary inspections for swine that have completed their movement within a single swine production system without diminishing the effectiveness of APHIS' swine disease monitoring and surveillance activities.

The rule became effective Dec. 3.

DHS Names Lautner as Plum Island Chief

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced the selection of Dr. Beth Lautner as director of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center. Lautner is currently vice president of science and technology at the National Pork Board.

Lautner will take the reigns at Plum Island Jan. 1 from acting director Marc Hollander, who has been in charge since DHS took over responsibility of Plum Island from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in June.

In a unique arrangement, Lautner will be paid by DHS, but will not be a government employee. In an arrangement between DHS, the Pork Board and Lautner, she could remain at Plum Island up to four years before returning to work for the Iowa-based group.

Dr. Paul Sundberg was named vice president of science and technology at the National Pork Board, replacing Lautner.

Sundberg previously served on Lautner's staff as assistant vice president of veterinary issues. Pork Board CEO Steven Murphy said he has mixed emotions about Lautner's opportunity.

"We are fortunate to have someone with Paul Sundberg's knowledge, passion and skills in place to

continue to oversee the vital scientific work being conducted for pork producers with their Checkoff investment. And it's a great compliment to our industry and to our staff that Dr. Beth Lautner has been selected to head the Plum Island facility, whose research and diagnostic work is critical to this country's food safety. But her energy and devotion to serving the needs of pork producers will be sorely missed," said Murphy.

Lautner's appointment, which makes her the first female director in the 50-year history of PIADC, garnered statements from others, as well.

"She's absolutely the best person for the job. She has a terrific background," said Maureen McCarthy, Homeland Security director of the Office of Research and Development, which oversees the agency's labs.

"I hope that she will have the mandate and ability to carry out the many security objectives that I have discussed with Secretary (Tom) Ridge," Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton told *Newsday*. "The mission of this facility is vitally important to our national security." Clinton (D-N.Y.) represents the state where Plum Island is located.



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Pork Replaced by Wild Game as Main Source of *Trichinella* Infection

Although trichinellosis was associated historically with eating *Trichinella*-infected pork from domesticated sources, wild game meat was the most common source of infection during 1997-2001.

During this five-year period, 72 cases were reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Of these, 31 (43 percent) cases were associated with eating wild game: 29 with bear meat, one with cougar meat, and one with wild boar meat.

In comparison, only 12 (17 percent) cases were associated with eating commercial pork products, including four cases traced to a foreign source.

Nine (13 percent) cases were associated with eating noncommercial pork from home-raised or direct-from-farm swine where U.S. commercial pork production industry standards and regulations do not apply.

Trichinellosis became a nationally reportable disease in 1966, but statistics have been kept on the disease since 1947.

In the United States, the national trichinellosis surveillance system has documented a steady decline in the reported incidence of this disease. During 1947-1951, a median of 393 cases (range: 327-487) was reported annually, including 57 trichinellosis-related deaths. During 1997-2001, the incidence decreased to a median of 12 cases annually (range: 11-23) and no reported deaths.

CDC's National Center for Infectious Diseases concluded that the majority of the decline in reported trichinellosis cases is a result of improved observance of standards and regulations in the U.S. commercial pork industry, which has altered animal husbandry practices resulting in reduced *Trichinella* prevalence among swine.

Overall, the decrease in cases has mirrored the decline in prevalence of *Trichinella* in commercial pork products. In 1900, the trichinellosis prevalence was estimated to be 1.41 percent. The estimated prevalence decreased to 0.125 percent during 1966-1970 and to 0.013 percent in 1995.

No apparent change in the trichinellosis surveillance system can account for this decline. However, because the surveillance system is not designed to detect asymptomatic cases, the number of reported cases probably represents only a portion of the total number of infections.

This decline reflects changes in the U.S. pork industry that have reduced exposure of domestic swine to Trichinella.

This decline reflects changes in the U.S. pork industry that have reduced exposure of domestic swine to *Trichinella*. Historically, the major sources of *Trichinella*-infected pork were swine fed garbage containing animal waste products. Trichinellosis prevalence among swine decreased after garbage cooking laws were passed to control vesicular exanthema (1953-54) and hog cholera (1962). In 1980, Congress passed the Federal Swine Health Protection Act that prohibits feeding potentially contaminated garbage to swine.

The United States Department of Agriculture, the National Pork Producers Council, and the pork processing industry have developed the *Trichinae* Herd Certification Program. This is a voluntary pre-harvest pork safety program that provides documentation of swine management practices to minimize *Trichinella* exposure. The goal of the program is to establish a sys-

tem under which pork production facilities that follow good production practices might be certified as *Trichinella*-safe.

In addition to the reduction in *Trichinella* prevalence in commercial pork, processing methods have also contributed to the dramatic decline in human trichinellosis associated with pork products. Through the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, USDA has stipulated specific cooking temperatures and times, freezing temperatures and times and curing methods for processed pork products to control post-harvest human exposure to *Trichinella*.

Because of the successful reduction in *Trichinella* prevalence among swine in the U.S. commercial pork industry, the majority of cases of human trichinellosis are now associated with wild game meat, non-commercial pork, and foreign pork.

Persons at risk need a greater understanding of the changing risks for trichinellosis, of the methods for safe meat preparation, and of the limitations of those methods in certain circumstances, if further reduction in the incidence of this disease is to be achieved in the United States.

Trichinellosis Surveillance – United States, 1997-2001, appeared in the July 25, 2003 issue of Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Information about the Trichinae Herd Certification Program can be obtained on the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/trichinae/.

Secretary Veneman Lists Protection of Food Supply, National Animal ID System as Top Priorities

Remarks Made in October 12 Video Address to USAHA/AAVLD

While saying great strides have been made in the eradication and prevention of animal diseases, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman said that recent events suggest that "new threats continue to emerge."

In a video address delivered to animal health officials and industry leaders attending joint

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Together, we must develop a system that works."

annual meetings of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) in San Diego, Calif., Veneman said, "The work you are doing to promote and protect animal health is vital to our livestock and poultry producers."

Livestock and poultry industries contribute significantly to the nation's economy, said Veneman, providing an estimated three million jobs. "This year, the value of livestock production in the United States is estimated at about \$101 billion, the second largest in history."

Veneman said pork, beef and poultry are three of the top ten fastest growing U.S. exports, noting that animal agriculture is increasingly important to the nation's trade balance.

She said the fact that the President's budget has supported record levels of funding for USDA's food safety programs, and

significant increases for agricultural protections systems, demonstrates that protection of the food supply is a top priority of the Bush Administration.

"In the opening days of this Administration, we confronted the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Europe, and we took significant actions to prevent the disease in this country," said Veneman. "The events of September 11, 2001, led to a greater focus on intentional threats to animal production and our food system," she continued.

Veneman said stepped up research into vaccine development and improved diagnostic measures, the establishment of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, and a new emergency operations center in Maryland are aiding the country's pest and disease infrastructure and rapid-response efforts. "Last year, our systems were put to the test with major disease outbreaks of avian influenza in Virginia and exotic Newcastle disease in California and the southwest." She said the discovery of a single case of BSE in Canada in May of this year provided another test.

"All of these animal health issues point to the importance of the development of a National Animal Identification System, which is a key priority for USDA, and I know it is for you, as well," Veneman told the audience of over 1,000 attendees. She said an effective animal identification system will help enhance the speed and accuracy of the U.S.' ability to respond to animal disease outbreaks.

"Together, we must develop a system that works."

U.S. Animal Health Association Accepts Animal ID Plan

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group of pork producers and industry experts, with oversight from the Pork Board's Swine Health Committee, in an effort to develop and maintain workable standards for pork producers in collaboration with other species groups.

"The pork industry understands the importance of effective ID for successful eradication programs, such as pseudorabies," said Engle. "The goal with this national plan is to adopt national standards that will allow rapid trace-back of foreign animal diseases in U.S. livestock and poultry." The plan calls for a 48-hour traceback capability in the event of a disease outbreak to assist in protection of the nation's food supply.

A comment period, ending Jan. 31, 2004, is now open for all interested individuals and groups to present their input and suggestions. A copy of the Plan is available at www.usaip.info. Comments may be emailed to Communication@USAIP.info, faxed to 719-538-8847, or mailed to USAIP Comments, 660 Southpointe Court, Suite 314, Colorado Springs, CO, 80906.

The National Animal Identification Development Team comprises a diverse group of livestock industry participants including producers, producers organizations, breed associations, marketers, and processors as well as state and federal animal health officials committed to the goal of developing a standardized national identification system to assist in rapid animal traceback in the event of an animal health emergency.

Commentary

Why The U.S. Needs A Mandatory Animal ID System

By Jon Caspers



The recent diagnosis of mad cow disease in Canada underscores the importance and necessity of establishing an enhanced national animal identification system in the United States to ensure the health of the U.S. swine herd.

The benefits of a national animal health identification system include enhanced disease control and eradication capabilities, rapid containment of foreign animal disease outbreaks, and improved ability to respond to threats to biosecurity.

A national system would also provide benefits to industry in terms of market access and consumer demands. Pork products from the United States are highly marketable worldwide, and assuring timely and effective animal traceability through mandatory animal identification will add value to our products.

Other countries such as Canada and the UK have already developed systems that are being used to assist in traceback of foreign animal diseases. These systems are rapidly becoming the world standard. With these things in mind, the United States needs to be consistent with the animal tracking systems of its international trading partners to avoid the loss of international markets in the event of an outbreak of disease.

The swine industry has had mandatory identification requirements since 1988. However, the importance of a coordinated

across-species mandatory identification system cannot be underestimated. Without an enhanced system in place, we remain vulnerable to disease and the threat of targeted bioterrorism aimed at harming U.S. livestock and reducing confidence in our food supply.

In response to these concerns, the National Institute for Animal Agriculture coordinated the efforts of the National Identification Task Force last year. The task force involved intensive work by state, industry and federal partners with 100 representatives of more than

“. . . the system that is developed needs to be accurate, effective and affordable for pork producers.”

30 stakeholder groups, including the National Pork Producers Council and the National Pork Board. These efforts resulted in a National Identification Work Plan released a year ago.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the new National Identification Development Team used the work plan as a basis to develop the "Draft U.S. Animal Identification Plan" released last month. The revised report will be presented for review and adoption at the U.S. Animal Health Association meeting this month in San Diego.

Phase One of the plan, Premises ID, is expected to be in place by next July. This phase would require that standardized premises identification numbers be established for all production operations, markets, assembly points,

exhibitions and processing plants.

The overall goal of the proposed National Animal Identification System is to achieve a traceback system capable of identifying all premises that had direct contact with a diseased animal within 48 hours after discovery. However, we believe that the challenge is to develop a realistic system for pork producers and yet achieve the 48-hour traceback objective. In addition, the system that is developed needs to be accurate, effective and affordable for pork producers.

NPPC believes that the proposed system will enhance the current mandatory market swine identification system and furnish a cooperatively developed national database with data maintained in a secure and confidential manner.

Without the tags, brands and other identification systems in place in Canada, the hunt for all cattle linked to the cow infected with BSE would have taken far longer and resulted in the needless destruction of many more animals. Just as with prior foreign animal disease incidents, the Canadian BSE case dramatized the potential of animal disease to affect economies and diverse industries, let alone food choices and availability. We cannot let another day go by without a detection system in place – there is simply too much at stake.

Publisher's Note

Jon Caspers, a pork producer from Swaledale, Iowa, is the president of the National Pork Producers Council.

Focus on Domestic/Feral Swine Interface

Pork Industry Professionals Heighten Efforts to Control PRV

"A work in progress." That's how Dr. John Korslund, a swine specialist with USDA's APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) sums up PRV control efforts in this country.

Major progress came to fruition Feb. 27-28, 2003, when the National Institute for Animal Agriculture's (NIAA) Feral Swine Ad-hoc Committee met in Tampa, Florida. One landmark accomplishment of the USDA-sponsored summit was to define pigs according to three classes, commercial, feral and transitional.

"For many years industry leaders have tried to define the differences in domestic and feral swine as they relate to PRV," says Dr. Paul Sundberg, the National Pork Board's (NPB) vice president, veterinary issues. "The Tampa meeting marked the first time we put on paper consensus definitions."

So now commercial swine distinction includes pigs owned, and consistently and continuously managed. Moreover, they have adequate facilities and practices to reasonably prevent exposure to either transitional production or feral swine.

This explanation differs from the definition established when the state/federal/industry national PRV eradication program was launched in 1989, which identified commercial pigs simply as "domestic" pigs.

Feral swine are now characterized as free roaming and having no owner. They breed on their own and eat what they can find. Formerly, they were just "wild" pigs.

Transitional production includes swine that are, or have the reasonable expectation to be, exposed to feral swine.

Transitional production is a gray area that can include any of several scenarios, Sundberg points out. "For example, some people

will trap feral pigs, put them in a pen, feed them, then sell them," he begins. "So those animals started as feral but may be managed for a short period of time. With the new category, they fall into transitional production relative to PRV eradication."

"Managing the potential for feral and transitional pigs to interact with commercial pigs will help the U.S. to move to zero PRV status in commercial production," Sundberg says.

According to Korslund, one noteworthy challenge is that PRV in feral pigs is probably less pathogenic than the old field virus that typically affects domestic commercial swine. "That means feral pigs are less likely to exhibit clinical signs, won't get as sick and won't react as fast to serological tests," Korslund says. "So it can be tough to diagnose PRV in feral pigs and tough to get rid of the disease."

Guidelines for States

In addition to establishing new production definitions, NIAA's ad-hoc feral swine group that met in Tampa designed a plan to assist states, the National PRV Control Board, and USDA, APHIS, VS in assessing and controlling the interface of feral and domestic swine (See PRV Issues section at [\[malagriculture.org\]\(http://malagriculture.org\) to view the plan\). Endorsed by the United States Animal Health Association \(USAHA\), the blueprint is based on demographics, existing control measures and verification methods.](http://www.ani-</p>
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Request for Teams

During the USAHA annual meeting in October 2003, USAHA's PRV Committee asked USDA's APHIS to form teams to review individual states' programs to manage feral swine.

"The intention is for these teams to use the guidelines that were formulated in Tampa," Sundberg says. "Most states already have programs that adequately address feral swine issues. But for those states that don't, the review teams can provide some ideas to help them make changes to improve the situation."

It would be impossible to have all components of feral swine surveillance and control under federal jurisdiction, Korslund and Sundberg concur.

"Since each feral swine issue is unique, it's best to have local people involved that are familiar with the specific situation," says Korslund, adding that the first review team could be up and running by early 2004.

Linda L. Leake

Minnesota Declared PRV-Free

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has declared the state of Minnesota pseudorabies-free, according to a recent announcement from the Minnesota Board of Animal Health.

"Pseudorabies eradication has been a long time coming," said Minnesota Pork Producers Association Executive Director

Dave Preisler. "The process of eradicating this disease has been tough on many. But now, thanks to the cooperation between the state, producers, and veterinarians, pseudorabies is gone."

Minnesota ranks third in the nation for pork production, generating over \$1 billion in 2002.

PRV: Current State of the States

As of Nov. 15, 2003, 46 states are in Stage V, PRV-free relative to commercial domestic swine. Iowa, Pennsylvania, Florida and Texas are Stage IV, but all four states will be eligible for Stage V status in 2004.

"I believe all four states will be eligible for Stage V by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture's (NIAA) annual meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah in April 2004," USDA's John Korslund elaborates. "It will be up to the individual states to develop their application and submit it for consideration at that time."

U.S. Target for PRV Free Status

When will the entire country be declared free of PRV? Answer: a) two years after the release of quarantine of the last confirmed case in commercial production, with continued surveillance in the national swine population and vaccination terminated in commercial production; and b) one year after all states have implemented disease management plans for feral and transitional swine populations.

The last confirmed case in commercial production was in Pennsylvania in February of 2003. "So," Korslund says, "the 2-year date would be about March 2005, assuming there are no new commercial herd outbreaks and all states have implemented adequate feral/transitional pig management plans."

National Plan for Post Eradication

Emergency response, surveillance and feral swine are three critical areas to address as the country moves toward official PRV-Free status, according to Jim Leafstedt, a retired Alcester, South Dakota-based seedstock producer who serves as chair of the NIAA PRV Eradication Task Force.

To that end, 27 industry stakeholders, including USDA personnel, state veterinarians, and the National Pork Board (NPB) Swine Health Committee recently updated the National Plan for

PRV Post-Eradication that was first adopted in 2000.

These updates were compiled during the PRV Post-Eradication Summit II, held September 22 and 23, 2003 in Des Moines, Iowa.

"The revised plan addresses emergency response to re-infection, surveillance needs, and the potential for disease transmission from feral swine," says Leafstedt, who chaired the meeting.

"Also known as the PRV End-Game Plan, the document is the roadmap for navigating through issues as we go to U.S. PRV-free status," adds NPB's Paul Sundberg. "We know we won't get rid of feral pigs, nor will we eradicate PRV in these animals, so we have to reduce the risks of transmission from them."

"It would be beneficial to reduce or eliminate feral swine in states or areas where they are not well established," says Phil Bradshaw, chairman of the National PRV Control Board. "But that's a difficult task, so it's a positive step to have a good plan to manage risks." Bradshaw finishes 10,000 to 12,000 hogs annually near Griggsville, Illinois.

International Impact

Currently, there are no production effects from PRV, but the economic impact is not zero because not having national PRV-free status still affects international trade, Sundberg points out. "So in order to satisfy our international trading partners, it's important for the state/federal/industry cooperative program to be finished successfully in as timely a manner as possible," he says.

"We need to be able to guarantee that our commercial swine are free of PRV by using credible science-based methods for surveillance and for managing the risks from feral and transitional swine," Sundberg emphasizes.

Linda L. Leake

Pork Producer Elected to USAHA Leadership Position

South Dakota pork producer James Leafstedt was elected to serve as third vice president of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) for 2004, during the organization's 107th annual meeting held in San Diego, Calif., in October. USAHA is an organization of state and federal animal health officials, practicing veterinarians, research scientists and livestock producers.

Leafstedt has been a leader in pork industry and animal health issues for many years, currently serving on the National Pork Board's Swine Health Committee. He is also chairman of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture's (NIAA) Pseudorabies Eradication Task Force and received the NIAA President's Award earlier this year recognizing the organization's outstanding committee leader of the year.

This election leads to a future presidency of the association for Leafstedt.

Dr. Donald H. Lein, former director of the New York State Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory at Cornell University, was elected USAHA president for the coming year. Other officers are Dr. Richard Willer, Arizona state veterinarian, president-elect; Dr. Bret Marsh, Indiana state veterinarian, first vice-president; and Dr. Lee Myers, Georgia state veterinarian, second vice president. Robert Frost, a California llama producer, is immediate past-president.

AASV Announces 2004 Annual Meeting



Swine veterinarians will go "Back to the Basics" for the 35th annual meeting of the American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV), scheduled for March 6-9, 2004, at the Marriott hotel in downtown Des Moines, Iowa.

Dr. John Waddell, AASV President-Elect and Program Chair, will introduce the general session presentations, which address disease and other basic issues facing today's swine practitioner. Waddell will also lead a full afternoon session devoted to PRRS topics.

Dr. Robert Desrosiers, St-

Hyacinthe, Quebec, is slated to present the prestigious Howard Dunne Memorial Lecture. His message will focus on the epidemiology, diagnosis, and control of swine diseases. Presentations on the potential effect of swine zoonosis on the global pork market, national strategies for disease control and biosecurity, and ethics in modern swine practice will follow.

In addition, the 35th anniversary of the association will be acknowledged in a reflective Founder's message presented by charter member Dr. Ralph Vinson.

Concurrent sessions on emerging technologies, research topics, production issues, and diarrheal diseases in growing pigs will pro-

vide meeting attendees with plenty of continuing education options from which to choose.

Twelve pre-conference seminars will be offered on topics including reproduction, facility design, welfare, nutrition, emerging diseases, foreign animal disease, applied medicine, skills for practitioners, and PRRSV.

As in the past, the AASV Foundation is sponsoring a seminar on protecting financial resources, and a seminar designed for veterinary students and recent graduates is planned as well.

Attendance is limited to veterinarians and veterinary students. Registration and program information is available on the Internet at www.aasv.org/aasv/annmtg/.

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