

**Animal Health Emergency Management
Council Report**

2013 NIAA Annual Conference

Tuesday, April 16, 2013



The Animal Health Emergency Management Council met on Tuesday, April 16, 2013 from 2:00 – 5:30 p.m. during the 2013 NIAA Annual Conference in Louisville, Kentucky with about 37 people present. Dr. Matthew Cochran and Dr. Lindsey Holmstrom served as Co-Chairs.

The council session focused technology and tools for U.S. FAD preparedness and response. The following speakers presented relevant information addressing perspectives on this topic across the food chain, to include pre- and post-harvest livestock and poultry as well as wildlife:

Dr. Barb Masters, Senior Policy Advisor, *OFW Law*, presented “Emergency Preparedness and Response.”

Dr. Masters provided information on current response plans and regulatory action for foodborne outbreaks, to include product recalls. Distinction was made between the roles of USDA APHIS in protecting animal health and USDA FSIS in protecting public health. Food defense plans and tools were highlighted, with real life examples given to demonstrate these efforts. Consequences and impacts due to foodborne outbreaks, such as product recalls and effects on consumer confidence and perception on animal products, were discussed. Dr. Masters provided a case study on pet food recalls to demonstrate the impacts of this response measure and provided strategies to address food safety concerns and areas needing improvement.

Dr. Lily Edwards-Callaway, Technical Service, Animal Welfare, JBS USA, LLC, presented “Outbreak Response from a Packer’s Perspective.”

Dr. Edwards-Callaway provided insight on FAD outbreak response strategies for JBS packing plants, which are located throughout the U.S. and process thousands of livestock and poultry each day. Current food defense plans for this packing plant were discussed. Potential impacts to the packing industry, such as economic costs and determining where to shift cattle movements if certain packing plants are located within an outbreak zone, were presented. While current strategies focus on response and recovery after an outbreak, Dr. Edwards-Callaway stressed more work can be done with FAD preparedness and prevention and stated JBS’s interest in becoming more involved in these types of efforts with other sectors of the agriculture industry.

Dr. Lindsey Holmstrom; Diagnostic Epidemiologist, *Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Center*, presented “Feral Swine and Foreign and Emerging Animal Diseases.”

Dr. Holmstrom provided information on the current knowledge of feral swine populations in the U.S., highlighting concerns of their increasing population size and distribution across the U.S. Potential concerns and involvement of feral swine with potential outbreaks of FMD, ASF and CSF were discussed. Factors involved in disease spread within feral swine populations were explained. Finally, data collection efforts on wild pig populations in California to address knowledge gaps regarding FAD spread within these populations, and preliminary results were presented.

Mr. Neil Hammerschmidt, Manager, Animal Disease Traceability, USDA/APHIS/ VS, presented “USDA-APHIS IT Update.”

Mr. Hammerschmidt provided an update on USDA IT efforts for outbreak response on behalf of Mr. John Picanso. Data sharing and exchange standards and initiatives were discussed, as well as updates and/or progresses on the Surveillance Collaboration Services (SCS, EMRS 2.0, MIMs and VSPS systems. A diagram of where these systems operate within the USDA firewall, and connections to outside systems, such as AgCONNECT and MIM, was presented.

Dr. Keith Biggers, Director, Computing and Information Technology, Texas Center for Applied Technology, presented “AgCONNECT and the Information Dashboard Framework.”

Dr. Biggers gave an overview of the research and activities at the Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense Center (FAZD Center), focusing on information analysis systems and the development of AgCONNECT. AgCONNECT is a suite of tools that support biosurveillance, outbreak response, business continuity, and laboratory capacity. Current uses of all these tools within the USDA, DHS, and industry were presented. Future plans for the AgCONNECT tools, including large scale exercises and multi-state pilots, eCVI integration and integration with USAHERDS and SCS were presented.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- One new resolution was adopted.
- Resolutions AHEM1, AHEM2, AHEM3, AHEM4 and AHEM5 were reaffirmed.
- Action item: Hold regular conference calls and/or email exchanges with committee members to discuss updates related to emergency management throughout the year, in addition to communication for conference planning.
- Consensus Points for NIAA White Paper Development:
 - 1) Encourage more communication and collaboration with the Packing Industry regarding animal health and emergency management issues and outbreak response.
 - 2) Continue addressing wildlife issues and knowledge gaps as related to FAD outbreak preparedness and response efforts.
 - 3) Continue working on data integration and utilities that facilitate disease response.

General Discussion: None

Council Session adjourned at 5:30pm.