

National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection

Update of the BSE Enhanced Surveillance Effort

Purpose

This briefing paper provides an update on the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Enhanced Surveillance effort that the Secretary announced on March 15, 2004, and that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) began implementing on June 1, 2004.

Background

- The BSE Enhanced Surveillance effort will help determine if BSE is present in the U.S. cattle population; and if so, to what extent.
- The effort, over a period of 12–18 months, will obtain as many samples as possible from the targeted high risk population in which the disease is most likely to occur.
- The effort incorporates recommendations from an international scientific review panel and the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis.
- To implement the effort, APHIS formed a National and Regional Command Team under the Incident Command Structure to ensure we meet goals and performance standards on both a local and national level.
- Participants in the joint effort include APHIS, the Food and Drug Administration, Food Safety and Inspection Service, State veterinarians, and industry.

Sample Collection

- From June 1 through October 17, 2004, the cumulative total of samples received and tested is 87,438 (ELISA—85,842; IHC—1,596).
- All samples have tested negative including the two inconclusives. Both of the inconclusive test results reported on June 25 and 29, 2004, tested negative upon confirmatory testing at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL).
- The BSE National Animal Health Laboratories Network of 8 geographically dispersed, high-throughput laboratories (including NVSL) is currently testing over 5,000 samples per week.

BSE Surveillance Outreach

- An extensive \$2.5 million communications plan has been developed to educate cattle owners, slaughter establishments, rendering facilities, veterinary diagnostic laboratories, public health laboratories, sale barns, livestock auctions, and the media.
- A help desk and 800 number have been set up for sample collectors, submitters, Area Veterinarians in Charge, etc., to help with information technology issues.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) maintains an extensive BSE Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov.
- Outreach and educational events are ongoing and include a print advertising campaign, radio advertising, and direct mail campaigns. At the beginning of

November, outreach kits will be shipped to industry, veterinarians, States, extension offices, and the media.

Verification of the Enhanced Surveillance Effort

- Agricultural Marketing Service audits provided data on how well procedures for the Enhanced Surveillance effort were being followed at field and laboratory locations.
- A Government Accountability Office (GAO) Audit Entrance Conference was held with APHIS during the first week of September. GAO recommended beginning the implementation audit after January 1, 2005.
- The Office of the Inspector General will have its entrance conference with APHIS for the implementation audit the week of November 12.
- In addition, APHIS will continue to verify the different aspects of the effort such as data collection and analysis.

BSE Transition from the Incident Command

- Effective November 1, 2004, we will transition from the Incident Command Structure to a maintenance mode of operation.
- APHIS employees will function in a structure similar to the Incident Command, but employees will work from their home base.
- Key contacts and national leadership are in place to ensure that all of the essential aspects—sample collection, administration, staffing, quality control, laboratory, information technology, outreach activities, and training—continue to meet our high standards.
- APHIS is developing alternatives for the next phase of BSE surveillance with recommendations on surveillance strategies to follow when the one-time Enhanced Surveillance has been completed.

BSE Response Plan

- As an emergency preparedness measure, USDA developed a BSE Response Plan to be initiated if an additional case(s) of BSE is diagnosed in the United States.
- The plan contains detailed notification procedures and gives comprehensive instructions for USDA staff regarding who is responsible for what, when, where, and how. These procedures were implemented following the Washington State detection.

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