



# FEDERAL VETERINARIAN

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

NAFV Members,

You will notice this issue is published on a delayed timeline. This delay was due to a recent change the NAFV BOD has made regarding the publishing of our newsletter.

As we mentioned in our December and January issues, the NAFV BOD has been exploring cost-saving measures for the association. To this effect, the BOD has decided to move from publishing 10 issues/year to 6 issues/year.

This delayed February issue will help us in the change-over to the new bi-monthly schedule. The next issue will be dated March-April.

If you have any questions or comments about how this may affect you, please contact our National Office.

### ► Inside this issue:

- Dr. Courtney Baldwin on the AVMA-VLC Pg. 2
- Call for Consultation Topics Pg. 4
- ASF Affected Regions Updated Pg. 4
- FDA Summary On Antimicrobials Use in Food-Producing Animals Pg. 8
- APHIS & FSIS Highlights for 2018 Pg. 10

## The 2018/2019 Shutdown Aftermath: What We've Learned

by Mariana C. Barros,  
NAFV AEVP

The *partial* government shutdown that started December 22, 2018 and lasted through January 25, 2019, was the longest federal government shutdown in US history. During this time, images like the screenshot pictured here were commonplace on most government-run websites. Beyond the disruption of government spending and programming, however, how does a shutdown like the one we've just been through affect the government's workforce, its human capital, and the American economy as a whole? Over the past few weeks, we have been gathering information on just that - here's what we found.

### Impact on Workforce

As you'll remember, NAFV put out several calls to action during the shutdown, including sending information on how to appropriately approach your congressional representatives, along with the gathering of impact stories to better help us understand how our membership was being affected. During these efforts, we engaged with many of our members. Most of you, as exempted employees, continued to show up for work and performed your essential duties. Some of you, were furloughed and unable to address your critical duties.

In the early days of the shutdown, the questions we received were relatively few. After the first week, however, once we entered the period following the 28th of December and the last regularly scheduled paychecks had been processed, we noticed a turn in the members' communications. In many cases, more so than concern for themselves, members were expressing

Due to a lapse in federal funding, this USDA website will not be actively updated. Once funding has been reestablished, online operations will continue.

For impacted USDA employees, click to refer to the USDA Be Prepared webpage for additional resources.

concern for their colleagues and subordinates.

For example, for PHVs who continued to perform food safety oversight in plants all over the country, while their own financial concerns were surely present, it seemed that workforce issues were causing the most stress. In many plants, when inspectors were having to call out because they couldn't afford to get gas since they weren't getting paid, it was up to the veterinarian either to find coverage or provide help on the inspection line.

Because of media coverage, the general public became increasingly sympathetic towards the circumstances that public servants were experiencing. Crowdfunding campaigns, food banks, and special discounts designed to alleviate financial stress began to spread. In response to these new opportunities provided in the age of e-communications, the Office of Government Ethics published the [\*Ethics Guidance for Employees in Non-Pay Status During a Lapse in Appropriations\*](#), which laid out the acceptable parameters under which federal employees can accept gifts, crowdfunding gifts, and outside employment.

### Impact on Human Capital

For members who were fur-

(Continued on Pg. 2, "Shutdown Impact")

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(Continued from Pg. 1, "Shutdown Impact")

loughed, many of you reached out to us expressing similar sentiments of simply wanting to get back to work. Additionally, many of our fur-loughed veterinarians informed us that they had looked for work outside of the government.

As many of our members expressed, joining the federal government is often alluring to folks with a sense of public service, but also because of its stability. When that sense of stability has been shaken, the effects could be felt years and decades down the line.

As reported in the [Federal Times](#), the shutdown happened during a critical period for recruitment at universities and college campuses. With an aging workforce, if current employees leave and future recruitment wanes, where will tomorrow's agency leaders come from?

### Impact on the Economy

In January 2019, the Congressional Budget Office published a report on [The Effects of the Partial Shutdown Ending January 2019](#) that delved into the financial impact the shutdown had on employees, industry, and the American economy.

A few noteworthy stats include an estimated 25% (\$329B) of overall discretionary agency funding affect-

ed activities in the Judicial Branch, and most Executive Branch agencies. In addition, federal employees' lack of spending and/or diluted contribution into GDP had an impact of reducing GDP by 0.1%. This was measured to be a total loss of \$3B in the fourth quarter of 2018, and \$8B in the first quarter of 2019.

Beyond its effect on GDP, the report cites many other less-tangible effects such as businesses who were not able to acquire licenses, or local economic impact from federal employees not purchasing goods and services that they otherwise would have.

While the shutdown impacted many federal employees from performing their duties, us here at the NAFV office continued our work as the voice for federally employed veterinarians. NAFV wrote and published several letters through coalitions urging the President and legislators to approve a funding bill as soon as possible. Additionally, NAFV published a [press release](#) that was followed up with an article request in which the NAFV President spoke with AVMA for a JAVMA article related to the shutdown's impact on the federal veterinary workforce. If you have any further questions or comments on the shutdown, please write to us!

## NAFV Member Attends AVMA's Veterinary Leadership Conference as 'Rising Leader'

In January of this year, NAFV along with the AVMA sponsored NAFV member, Dr. Courtney Baldwin, attended the AVMA's yearly Veterinary Leadership Conference as the NAFV Emerging Leader. Each year, as a constituent allied organization of the AVMA, NAFV can nominate one Emerging Leader to

attend the conference with sponsorship from AVMA and NAFV.

NAFV and AVMA are both committed to ensuring that young veterinarians are equipped with the necessary leadership skills to be able to lead veterinary and public health agency programs in the future. Thus, NAFV sees this oppor-



(Continued on Pg. 3, "VLC Wrap Up")

*(Continued from Pg. 2, "VLC Wrap Up")*

tunity as an avenue to ensure a veterinary leadership pipeline that can be utilized in succession planning for public veterinary medicine.

Dr. Baldwin was selected through a nomination process, in which her application was considered along with two others by a selection committee made up of current public veterinary leaders. Below, Dr. Baldwin has summarized her experience at the VLC.

In Chicago, Illinois this January 2019 I, a FSIS SPHV and soon-to-be Public Health Training Coordinator, was privileged to attend AVMA's Veterinary Leadership Conference (VLC), the veterinary profession's premier conference for leadership development. The opportunity introduced me to a unique mix of CE sessions,

AVMA governance meetings, and networking. It was a joy to connect with a diverse network of colleagues from all walks of the veterinary profession.

I was able to see how the VLC helps equip veterinary professionals at all career stages to take on new challenges and leadership roles that benefit both the individual attendee and the veterinary profession. This experience deepened my understanding of how AVMA works, while introducing me to exciting opportunities in which I can get involved! A bonus was the opportunity to earn up to 8 hours of continuing education credit.



**Pictures provided by Dr. Courtney Baldwin**

This experience gave me insight into how AVMA works and how important it is for veterinarians to support AVMA, because it supports them. It was easy to see AVMA as a voice for the individual veterinarian and for the field of veterinary medicine as a whole working with the government to implement changes that help advance the field. I appreciate the knowledge I gained from this experience, which was made possible by AVMA and NAFV. Thank you and I encourage other to see how they can get involved, Emerging Leader Courtney Baldwin!

### **Ag Sec Switches Title to Get Food Safety Leader in Place**

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue named three candidates to leadership positions held up by lack of Senate approval by shifting their titles to those that do not require Senate confirmation, including naming Dr. Mindy Brashears to lead the agency's food safety efforts.

In May 2018, President Donald Trump nominated Brashears as USDA's under secretary for food safety, a position unfilled since Elisabeth Hagen left the job in December 2013 during the Obama Administration. The Senate has yet to confirm the appointment.

On Monday, Perdue named Brashears as deputy under secretary for food safety, along with two other unconfirmed appointees -- Naomi Earp as deputy assistant secretary for civil rights, and Dr. Scott Hutchins as deputy under secretary for research, education, and economics, in a statement that pointedly said, "These positions do not require Senate confirmation."

All three had been confirmed by the Senate Agriculture Committee to more senior roles, but their nominations expired without receiving confirmation votes by the end of the 115th Congress in early January. The President has resubmitted their nominations to the Senate in the 116th Congress.

Brashears was re-nominated for under secretary for food safety; Earp for assistant secretary for civil rights and Hutchins for under secretary for research, education, and economics.

"At USDA, we've been engaged in fulfilling our mission without all of our players on the field, so we want to get these strong, qualified leaders in the game," Perdue said. "I want to thank these three for their patience, as their professional lives have been placed on hold for months during their nomination process. Now, they will get to work right away on behalf of the American people. Nevertheless, I urge the Senate to act on their new nominations as quickly as possible, so we can have them in the positions for which they were intended in the first place." While in their deputy roles as selected by Perdue, they will not be serving in "acting" capacities for the positions for which they have been nominated. As a result, they will not be able to exercise the functions or powers expressly delegated to the Senate-confirmed positions. As Deputy Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, Dr. Hutchins will oversee the Office of the Chief Scientist, with Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young continuing to

*(Continued on Pg. 4, "Perdue Names Deputy Leaders")*

(Continued from Pg. 3, "Perdue Names Deputy Leaders")

serve as acting chief scientist.

Brashears, Earp, and Hutchins will begin working at USDA on Tuesday, Jan. 29, 2019.

Brashears is a professor of food safety and public health and the director of the International Center for Food Industry Excellence at Texas Tech University.

Her research program focuses on improving food safety standards to make an impact on public health. Her work evaluates interventions in pre- and post-harvest environments and on the emergence of

antimicrobial drug resistance in animal feeding systems. These efforts resulted in a commercialized pre-harvest feed additive that can reduce E. coli and Salmonella in cattle.

Brashears also leads international research teams to Mexico, Central and South America to improve food safety and security and to set up sustainable agriculture systems in impoverished areas. She is past-chair of the National Alliance for Food Safety and Security and of the USDA multi-state research group.

Original Article: <https://bit.ly/2EymFig>

## CALL FOR NAFV CONSULTATION TOPICS!

NAFV Members, we are currently gathering topics for our Consultations and Intra-management meetings with APHIS and FSIS leadership.

As the voice for Federal Veterinarians, and with the authority from 5 CFR 251.201, NAFV gathers topics from membership relating to improvement of managerial effectiveness and the working conditions of supervisors and managers, as well as the identification and resolution of problems affecting agency operations and employees, including supervisors and managers.

We are asking members to send us your thoughts and recommendations on issues you have experienced or observed so that we can try to incorporate them into our next meeting. please include your personal email address and cell phone number.

Please submit consultation topics to [nafv@nafv.org](mailto:nafv@nafv.org) or mail to the address below.

**The National Association of Federal Veterinarians**  
1910 Sunderland Place, NW, Washington, DC 20036

All information gathered will be aggregated and kept anonymous.

## Multistate Psittacosis Outbreak among Poultry Plant Workers, 2018

The Virginia and Georgia departments of health are investigating a multistate outbreak of [psittacosis](#) occurring at two poultry slaughter plants owned by a single corporation. CDC and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are assisting with the investigation.

### Recommendations

- Contact a healthcare professional if you have fever, cough, headache, or muscle

aches after working at a poultry slaughter plant involved in the outbreak. Tell your healthcare professional that you may have been exposed to psittacosis. Healthcare professionals can treat psittacosis with antibiotics.

- Plant management should implement [steps to minimize exposures](#) to bird droppings and respiratory secretions to protect their workers.
- Learn how people who work in

poultry slaughter plants can [prevent psittacosis](#).

### Latest Outbreak Information

- During August–October 2018, psittacosis cases were reported among workers at two poultry slaughter plants in Virginia and Georgia. A single corporation owns both plants.
- *Chlamydia psittaci*, the type of bacteria that causes psittacosis, was detected by a laboratory test in

13

(Continued on Pg. 4,  
"Psittacosis Outbreak")

(Continued from Pg. 4, "Psittacosis Outbreak")

people. Additional illnesses in workers at the two plants have been identified, although have not been confirmed by the laboratory. The Virginia and Georgia departments of health may report all cases, making their case counts higher than what CDC reports (i.e., CDC is only reporting laboratory-confirmed cases).

- No deaths have been reported.
- Virginia and Georgia departments of health are conducting an investigation, and the number of cases is likely to change.
- Current evidence indicates that all of the people who have psittacosis work at poultry slaughter plants in two states: Virginia and Georgia. Investigators are still working to understand why the outbreak occurred.
- The affected plants in Virginia and Georgia voluntarily suspended operations for cleaning.
- On September 8, 2018, the affected plant in Virginia suspended operations. The plant reopened on September 18, 2018.
- On September 15, 2018, the affected plant in Georgia sus-

pending operations. The plant reopened on September 19, 2018.

- Plant management held town hall meetings in both plants to inform their workers about the outbreak.

CDC will provide updates when more information is available.

#### How You Can and Cannot Get Psittacosis

The most common way someone gets infected with the bacteria that cause psittacosis (*Chlamydia psittaci*) is by breathing in dust containing dried secretions (e.g., droppings, respiratory) from infected birds. **There is no evidence that these bacteria can spread by preparing or eating chicken meat.**

It is rare for psittacosis to spread from person to person. In this outbreak, infection among family members who are not workers at the affected plants has not been reported.

#### Symptoms of Psittacosis in People

In general, psittacosis causes mild illness in people. The most common symptoms include:

- Fever and chills
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Dry cough

Psittacosis can also cause pneumonia (a lung infection) that may require treatment or care in a hos-

pital. Rarely, psittacosis can result in death.

Most people begin developing signs and symptoms of psittacosis within 5 to 14 days after exposure to the bacteria (*C. psittaci*). Occasionally, people report the start of symptoms after more than 14 days.

#### Investigation Details September 19, 2018

The Virginia and Georgia departments of health are investigating a multistate outbreak of psittacosis occurring at two poultry slaughter plants owned by a single corporation. CDC and USDA are assisting with the investigation. CDC is working with USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service to identify other similar plants.

If you become aware of poultry workers with X-ray confirmed or clinician-diagnosed pneumonia or suspected psittacosis, please contact your local health department. [CDC can perform confirmatory laboratory testing.](#) Lower respiratory tract specimens (e.g., sputum) are ideal. CDC will also accept other specimen types (e.g., nasopharyngeal/oropharyngeal swabs, whole blood, stool) for this investigation.

Original Article: <https://bit.ly/2Nli04A>

## Regions Affected with African Swine Fever Updated to Include Mongolia

On January 15, 2019, Mongolia reported an outbreak of ASF. APHIS already considers Mongolia to be affected by three diseases that affect porcine species (e.g., foot and mouth disease, classical swine fever, and swine vesicular disease), so the current import requirements for porcine derived products and by-products from Mongolia may not change. However, Customs and Border Protections will refer to the updated country disease status lists when regulating these porcine materials, including those found in passenger baggage. ASF has also spread through China and through several EU Member States, including Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania.

For questions regarding animal products and by-products, please contact your local Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ), Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Veterinary Medical Officer, or contact the PPQ Quarantine Policy, Analysis and Support (QPAS) staff in Riverdale, Maryland at (301) 851-2281.

Original posting: <https://bit.ly/2U9ENV6>

## The Americas Region Discusses Actions to be Implemented in Animal Health

**Source: OIE | Punta Cana, 29 November 2018**

The 24th Conference of the Regional Commission of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) for the Americas held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, from 19 to 23 November 2018.

The conference brought together 89 participants, including national delegates and/or representatives of the 23 Member Countries of the Americas and authorities from OIE Headquarters, Regional and Sub-Regional Representation. Also participating were representatives of international and regional organizations involved in veterinary public and animal health activities in the region, several observers, experts and representatives of the private sector.

The participants had the opportunity to assess the achievements made during the implementation of the 6th Strategic Plan and the global challenges currently facing the OIE. The new approach proposed for the development of the 7th Strategic Plan, which will require the active participation of OIE Member Countries, was also presented.

The following technical topics were addressed during the conference: "The role of private Veterinarians in official veterinary service programmes: mechanisms of interaction, accreditation and quality control in a globalized world" and "Sustainability of veterinary services: experiences and challenges". Both topics generated discussions among the participants, resulting in a series of recommendations on actions to be implemented by the different parties involved. These recommendations will be presented for adoption by the OIE World Assembly during the 87th General Session in May 2019.

### Health situation of the region and the world

Participants received detailed information as well as an analysis of the situation and trends of the diseases of most concern to the region, compiled through the OIE Global Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), mainly avian influenza, foot and mouth disease, equine influenza, glanders and a selection of aquatic animal diseases.

The global African swine fever situation was presented. The disease is currently absent in the region and Member Countries were urged to implement prevention measures as established in the *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and to strengthen farm biosecurity.



Participating in the opening ceremony were: Dr. Mark Trotman, President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas and Delegate of Barbados, Dr. Nimia Lissette Gómez, Delegate of the Dominican Republic and Vice-President of the OIE Commission for the Americas, Excellency Osmar Benítez, Minister of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic, Dr. Monique Eloit, Director General of the OIE, Dr. Mark Schipp, Delegate of Australia and President of the OIE World Assembly and Dr. Luis Barcos, OIE Regional Representative for the Americas.

### Regional strategic mechanisms to implement national actions

With a view to supporting the development and implementation of national action plans against antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a roundtable was held in which participating countries presented their experiences in applying the One Health approach. The international organizations announced the activities carried out, as well as those planned to continue supporting the countries of the region in the development and implementation of national actions against AMR. In the Americas region, six Member Countries have national action plans on antimicrobial resistance and others are progressing in the development of such plans, so training at all levels to improve awareness of AMR and improved communication between government entities involved in the issue become key factors.

This conference reflected the interest of the OIE in encouraging the active participation of Member Countries in its present activities and future actions at the global level, as well as in the process of developing international standards in a consensual manner.

The discussions generated a series of recommendations that establish responsibilities in Member Countries and define supporting actions in order to continue strengthening Veterinary Services throughout the world.

The OIE would like to express its grateful thanks

(Continued on Pg. 7, "OIE Animal Health Actions")

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*(Continued from Pg. 6, "OIE Animal Health Actions")*

to the Government of the Dominican Republic for the organization of this conference. Participants received detailed information as well as an analysis of the situation and trends of the diseases of most concern to the region, compiled through the OIE Global Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), mainly avian influenza, foot and mouth disease, equine influenza, glanders and a selection of aquatic animal diseases.

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The OIE would like to express its grateful thanks to the Government of the Dominican Republic for the organization of this conference.

More from the conference:

- [Conference Photos](#)
- [Commitment to the Region of the Americas against antimicrobial resistance \(SPA\)](#)

**NAFV Members, have you recently retired or are planning to retire soon?  
Please make sure to keep us updated on your active status!  
You can find the NAFN information update form at the following link: <https://bit.ly/2GN46t0>**

## Master of Preventive Veterinary Medicine

The University of California, Davis welcomes applications for the Master of Preventive Veterinary Medicine (MPVM) Program in the School of Veterinary Medicine. The MPVM is a 1-2 year graduate professional master degree open to veterinarians and other medical professionals. Since 1967, the pioneering program's more than 900 graduates have excelled worldwide in leadership, academic, and research positions with universities, private industry, international agencies, non-governmental organizations, and governments.

Our modernized MPVM curriculum offers core courses in epidemiology concepts, study design, research, leadership, ecosystem health, and infectious disease epidemiology as well as statistics. Elective options allow students to explore zoonotic disease, food safety, diagnostic test evaluation, spatial analysis, mathematical modeling, disease ecology, and many more. Coursework in 'One Health' is available for students interested in public health and conservation at the interface of human-animal interaction. In addition to didactic instruction, students write a thesis on research they undertake during the course of the program. We support our extensive course offerings and student research with a large, diverse, vibrant faculty including new hires in epidemiology, wild life, food animals and poultry health, and a wealth of adjunct contributors from state and federal management agencies and organizations.

Instruction commences in early August each year.

Requirements for entry into the program include a minimum 3.0 GPA, as well as a TOEFL score of 85 or higher for non-English speakers. The application deadline is January 15<sup>th</sup> each calendar year. Interested applicants can learn more about admission requirements and explore financial aid options at <http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/mpvm/admission/admissioninfo.com>

Send inquiries to the MPVM Coordinator, Tami Ali ([tali@ucdavis.edu](mailto:tali@ucdavis.edu)); or the MPVM Chair, Dr. Ashley Hill ([achill@ucdavis.edu](mailto:achill@ucdavis.edu)).



### FDA: Summary Report On *Antimicrobials Sold or Distributed for Use in Food-Producing Animals*

#### Executive Summary

Each year, every sponsor of an approved or conditionally approved new animal drug application containing an antimicrobial active ingredient must report to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the amount of each such ingredient in these drug products sold or distributed for use in food-producing animals. FDA summarizes this information and makes it available to the public in annual summary reports. This reporting requirement was enacted by Congress in 2008 to assist FDA in its continuing analysis of the interactions (including antimicrobial resistance), efficacy, and safety of antimicrobials approved for use in both humans and food-producing animals.

This summary report presents the sales and distribution data for actively marketed antimicrobial drugs approved for use in food-producing animals by drug class, medical importance, route of administration, indication, and dis-

persing status, as well as species-specific estimates of these sales and distribution for the 2017 calendar year.

This 2017 summary report also includes multiple years of domestic sales and distribution data of actively marketed antimicrobial drugs by drug class, medical importance, and route of administration, as well as observations on the changes in the sales and distribution of these drugs from 2016 through 2017.

This 2017 summary report reflects changes in the marketplace since the complete implementation of Guidance for Industry (GFI) #2132 in January 2017, when all affected products that are medically important in human medicine (specifically, antimicrobials used in feed and water) transitioned from over-the-counter (OTC) marketing status to either prescription (Rx) or Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) marketing status and all production claims were removed.

#### Key observations from the report include:

- Domestic sales and distribution of medically important antimicrobials approved for use in food-producing animals:
  - decreased by 33% from 2016 through 2017.
  - decreased by 43% from 2015 (the year of peak sales) through 2017.
  - decreased by 28% from 2009 (the first year of reported sales) through 2017.
  - Tetracyclines, which represent the largest volume of these domestic sales (3,535,701 kg in 2017), decreased by 40% from 2016 through 2017.
- The domestic sales and distribution of medically important antimicrobials approved for use in food-producing animals that have an approved indication for production use decreased from 5,770,655 kg to 0 kg from 2016 through 2017 as a result

(Continued on Pg. 9, "FDA Summary")



(Continued from Pg. 8, "FDA Summary")  
of the implementation of GFI #213.

- The domestic sales and distribution of medically important antimicrobials approved for use in food-producing animals that are sold OTC decreased from 8,000,326 kg to 271,280 kg from 2016 through 2017 as a result of the implementation of GFI #213.
- Of the 2017 domestic sales and distribution of medically im-

portant antimicrobials approved for use in food-producing animals:

- Tetracyclines accounted for 64%, penicillins for 12%, macrolides for 8%, sulfas for 5%, aminoglycosides for 5%, lincosamides for 3%, and cephalosporins and fluoroquinolones each for less than 1%.

- An estimated 42% was intended for use in cattle, an estimated 36% intended for use in swine, an estimated 12% intended

for use in turkeys, an estimated 5% intended for use in chickens, and an estimated 5% intended for use in other species/unknown.

- An estimated 80% of cephalosporins, 72% of sulfas, 48% of aminoglycosides, and 44% of tetracyclines were intended for use in cattle. An estimated 84% of lincosamides and 40% of macrolides were intended for use in swine. An estimated 61% of penicillins were intended for use in turkeys.

## APHIS' 2018 Accomplishments Support American Producers and Protect U.S. Agriculture

Washington, D.C., Dec. 21, 2018 -- The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is celebrating the agency's many successful efforts over the past year in support of USDA's goals by protecting American agriculture, natural resources, and by enforcing the Animal Welfare and Horse Protection Acts.

"Our employees protect our nation's farmers, ranchers, and citizens in many ways – by keeping foreign diseases and pests out of the United States, helping maintain and increase export markets, preventing air disasters caused by birds flying into airplane engines, and ensuring that animals used in research or bred for sale as pets are treated humanely," said APHIS Administrator Kevin Shea. "We are meeting Secretary Perdue's goal of doing right and feeding everyone. I am very proud of all we've accomplished together so far, and I look forward to seeing what we can do in 2019 and beyond."

Some significant successes this year include eradicating three invasive species, launching a new outreach campaign that provides information on biosecurity to all poultry owners, responding to several new pest and disease detections, and supporting the use of sound science in international trade regulations.

### Eradicating Invasive Species

During 2018, APHIS announced the eradication of three different invasive species. U.S. cotton is now free of the devastating pink bollworm thanks to a rigorous program carried out by APHIS and its indispensable partners including State departments of agriculture and cotton growers. With the eradication, USDA lifted the domestic quarantine for pink bollworm, which relieves restrictions on the domestic and international movement of U.S. cotton and

saves producers millions of dollars each year on treatment costs.

APHIS and its partners successfully eliminated feral swine from Maryland and New Jersey. Three additional States (Iowa, Maine, and Oregon) saw significant reductions in feral swine populations. Feral swine cause major damage to property, agriculture (crops and livestock), native species and ecosystems, and cultural and historic resources. In fact, this invasive species costs the United States an estimated \$1.5 billion each year in damages. Feral swine also threaten the health of people, wildlife, pets, and other domestic animals. Through a strong cooperative effort, we are seeing successes but we must continue our efforts elsewhere in the country.

APHIS declared two Ohio communities free of Asian longhorned beetle (ALB): Monroe Township (after a seven-year eradication effort) and Stonelick Township (after a six-year eradication effort). The ALB has the potential to destroy millions of acres of American hardwood tree, including national forests and backyard trees.

### Launching "Defend the Flock" Outreach Campaign

Considering the devastating impact of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak in 2014-2015, as well as other poultry health issues in recent years, APHIS launched a new outreach campaign in 2018 focused on preventing the spread of infectious poultry diseases in both commercial and backyard poultry. The "Defend the Flock" campaign to promote biosecurity emphasizes the need for everyone who works with or owns poultry to work together to protect the health of all our poultry flocks. While the Nation has seen great strides in biosecurity over the

(Continued on Pg. 10, "APHIS Agriculture Accomplishments")

(Continued from Pg. 10, “APHIS Agriculture Accomplishments”)

past few years, biosecurity is an every day, every time effort. “Defend the Flock” provides anyone who works with poultry with the awareness, training, and reminders necessary to sustain good biosecurity practices.

### Emergency Response

In 2018, APHIS was very busy responding to a variety of plant and animal emergencies, protecting the health of our nation’s plant, animal, and natural resources and our ability to export billions of dollars in agricultural commodities. APHIS responded to several foreign pest and disease detections, including virulent Newcastle disease in California, spotted lanternfly in Pennsylvania and other States, and European cherry fruit fly in New York. APHIS also provided emergency support to protect pets and livestock during natural disasters such as hurricanes and

floods. APHIS is currently providing support for the California wildfire response, including providing personnel and equipment for animal feeding efforts.

### Export Markets Opened & Retained

APHIS helps ensure safe and free-flowing agricultural trade – worth more than \$50 billion annually – by keeping U.S. agricultural industries free from pests and diseases and certifying that the millions of U.S. agricultural and food products shipped to markets abroad meet the importing countries' entry requirements. APHIS also ensures imported agricultural products shipped to the United States from abroad meet the Agency's entry requirements to keep pests and diseases of agriculture from entering.

Read more about APHIS’ successes in our [end of year accomplishments report](#).

## FSIS Highlights Accomplishments in Protecting Public Health

Contact:  
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**WASHINGTON, Dec. 21, 2018** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) today announced key 2018 achievements in protecting public health by ensuring the safety of meat, poultry and processed egg products.

“In 2018, FSIS inspected more than 160 million head of livestock and 9.47 billion poultry carcasses, and conducted 6.9 million food safety and food defense tasks,” said Carmen Rottenberg, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety. “Our dedicated FSIS workforce continues to ensure that consumers have access to the safest meat and poultry supply in the world.”

### Targeting Foodborne Illness

FSIS has continued to target sampling and use other strategies to control Shiga-toxin producing *E. coli*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella*, and *Campylobacter*. FSIS is continuing to use whole genome sequencing to track

illness, inform inspection and policy decisions, and enhance our collaborations with sister agencies and state governments.

FSIS continues to ensure that meat and poultry products are safe and wholesome for American consumers by improving food safety education and targeted communication efforts. In January 2018, FSIS began posting individual establishment *Salmonella* performance standard category information for carcasses, raw poultry parts and comminuted poultry products to incentivize the poultry industry to implement better controls for *Salmonella*.

### Collaboration

Much of the agency’s work is conducted in cooperation with federal, state and municipal agencies, as well as private industry. In 2018, FSIS continued to strengthen its collaboration with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to meet the agency’s goal to improve coordination of federal food safety efforts and address cross-cutting priorities for food safety data. In addition, FSIS also maintained part-

nerships with 38 national, state and local organizations as part of a grassroots effort to spread the message about food safety.

### Modernization

During 2018, FSIS continued its initiatives to modernize operations and inspection systems. In early January, FSIS proposed to amend the egg products inspection regulations by requiring official plants that process egg products to develop Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) systems and Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (Sanitation SOPs) and to meet other sanitation requirements consistent with the meat and poultry regulations. Under this proposal, plants will be required to produce egg products in such a way that the finished product is free of detectable pathogens. This modernization will lead to innovations in the egg products industry as well as align egg products regulations with the meat and poultry products regulations.

On January 19, 2018, FSIS also announced a proposed rule to

(Continued on Pg. 11, “FSIS Highlights Public Health Accomplishments”)

(Continued from Pg. 10, “FSIS Highlights Public Health Accomplishments”)

modernize its swine slaughter inspection system, which is about five decades old. The proposed rule includes food safety and pathogen testing requirements for all swine slaughter establishments, in addition to an optional component, the New Swine Slaughter Inspection System (NSIS), which market hog establishments can choose to operate under voluntarily.

Additionally, FSIS proposed a number of deregulatory actions in 2018, including eliminating redundant regulations and taking a more science-based approach to regulatory controls. These proposed actions include removing unnecessarily prescriptive requirements for hog carcass cleaning, no longer requiring carcasses to be stamped with the USDA mark of inspection if the carcasses are to be also processed at the same facility, and no longer restricting the hours that an official establishment may prepare uninspected, inedible products, such as animal and pet food. Requiring establishments to follow these regulations no longer makes sense; meat and poultry establishments have been required to operate under Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) since the late 1990s and are required to have controls in place to prevent hazards before, during, and after slaughter and processing operations.

In February 2018, FSIS published criteria that it will use to consider new waiver requests from young chicken establishments to operate at line speeds up to 175 bpm. The waivers will allow these establishments to test new equipment, technologies, or procedures that would allow them to innovate and operate at faster line speeds as long as they are able to maintain process control when operating at faster line speeds.

### Siluriformes Inspection

FSIS began fully implementing the Siluriformes inspection program in September 2017, and moved quickly to finalize foreign country equivalence determinations. FSIS worked extensively with foreign countries to ensure that only countries that had equivalent food safety systems were permitted to ship Siluriformes to the U.S. On Sept. 14, 2018, Vietnam, China and Thailand met the documentation and equivalence requirements to be able to ship Siluriformes to the United States.

### Foreign Country Equivalence Oversight and Import Reinspection Programs

In 2018, FSIS completed ongoing equivalence verification audits of 18 countries to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations. In 2018, approximately 4.4 billion pounds of meat and poultry products were presented for FSIS re-inspection from the eligible countries that are actively exporting product to the United States. Currently more than 1,100 establishments and 39 countries are deemed eligible by FSIS.

### Outreach

During 2018, FSIS saw major success in raising awareness of safe food handling guidance, recalls and information about food-borne illness. FSIS achieved more than 62 million impressions from media outreach, web page views, social media engagements, educational material distribution, app downloads and direct conversations with individuals on the hotline and in the field. This represented approximately 25 percent above the annual target for the year.

FSIS continued to provide outreach and technical resources to small and very small plants and launched an initiative to prioritize outreach to small and very small establishments through utilization

of our Enforcement, Investigation and Analysis Officer (EIAO) field personnel. As part of this initiative, EIAOs dedicated more than 25,000 hours of time for direct outreach including one-on-one meetings with establishments, participation in roundtables, technical support, and onboarding of new establishments.

### Emerging Technologies

In recent years, scientists and industry have been developing products derived from the stem cells of animals, raising questions about regulatory jurisdiction, food safety controls and labeling of these meat and poultry products. FSIS proactively worked with its federal partners to determine the next steps, including hosting a joint public meeting (October 23-24, 2018) with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to discuss the use of cell culture technology to develop products derived from livestock and poultry. As a result, USDA and FDA are working jointly to oversee the production of cell-cultured food products derived from livestock and poultry in 2019. The regulatory framework will leverage USDA’s expertise in regulating, inspecting and labeling livestock and poultry products for human consumption.

### Next Steps

During 2019, FSIS will be working on *Campylobacter* standards, new *Salmonella* performance standards, finalizing rules proposed in 2018 and modernizing beef slaughter inspection.

FSIS currently employs more than 9,000 employees, of which over 8,000 work in federally regulated establishments, laboratories, import establishments or in-commerce facilities.

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# Federal Veterinarians Protect and Improve Public and Animal Health and Welfare

## Welcome New Members

**Dr. Samantha Bruce**, APHIS-VS, GS-12, CSU '18, Yakima, WA  
**Dr. Michelle Albin**, FSIS, GS-12, Bryan, TX  
**Dr. Cassie Nicole Rizzo**, FSIS, GS-12, KSU '09, Center, TX  
**Dr. Clarence Carl Ducummon III**, ARMY, O-3, OK '16, Baltimore, MD  
**Dr. Kevin DiVerde**, FSIS, GS-12, ISU '11, Brandon, SD (Recommended by  
 Dr. Brittany DiVerde)  
**Dr. Kelsey Travis**, FSIS, GS-12, MSU '15, Evansville, IN

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