



FEDERAL VETERINARIAN

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Announcements

ATTENTION!

UPCOMING
CHAPTER
MEETING:

RIVERDALE,
MD
03-03-2016

For details, email
Mariana Barros at
mbarros@nafv.org.

Nominations for the
2016 Salmon Award
recipient are still
being accepted.

Please visit
www.nafv.org
for more information.

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Your Association at Work

A copy of the letter below was sent to Representative Aderholt, along with all members on the Agricultural Appropriations committee on the House of Representatives and Senate this past month. NAFV strives to advocate for the interests of all federal veterinarians.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FEDERAL VETERINARIANS

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February 15, 2016

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt, MS
United States House of Representatives
Cannon House Office Building, Room 235
1st and Independence Ave., S.E.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Aderholt,

As a proponent of public service, the National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV) requests your support for the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) recommendations on the [2017 agriculture appropriations](#). The NAFV strives to probe American agriculture by serving veterinarians and the agencies they work for, ensuring the safety of the nation's food, and promoting the health and humane treatment of animals.

Federal veterinarians have eradicated more than 16 major diseases from this country over the past 125 years with agricultural appropriated funds. The federal government's programs are critical to providing federal veterinarians the necessary resources for preventing, controlling, and eliminating major animal and zoonotic diseases and pests from the United States. Controlling and eliminating these diseases saves our country billions of dollars in animal production costs, contributes greatly to animal health and welfare, and significantly reduces the cost of food in the United States.

Last year the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) euthanized over 48 million birds during the outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The cost of the outbreak was high and the demands on Federal personnel resources were overloaded. "The value of turkey and laying hen losses are estimated at nearly \$1.6 billion. Economy-wide losses are estimated at \$3.3 billion. Since the HPAI outbreak in December 2014, 18 U.S. trading partners have imposed bans on all shipments of U.S. poultry and

(Continued on Pg. 3, "Association Letter")

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Any veterinarian employed full time by the federal government may become an active member (non DoD dues \$234.00 annually, payable annually, semiannually, or by federal payroll deductions—eligibility limited solely to USDA veterinarians—of \$9.00 authorized by signing USDA Form AD 1054 (FSIS) or SF 1187 (APHIS) and DoD dues \$150.00 annually). Fifty dollars of the annual dues is for the subscription to the Federal Veterinarian.

Associate membership may be granted to active members when they retire from federal service. Associate members pay no dues. Associate mailed subscriptions are \$25.00 per year.

The National Association of Federal Veterinarians is a non-profit corporation and the purposes for which it is formed are to promote the veterinary profession, to improve the professional efficiency and material interests of the members, to acquaint the public with the activities of veterinarians in the federal service, and to cooperate with the American Veterinary Medical Association, the United States Animal Health Association and other similar groups with common interests.

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EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**Benefits of Being on the NAFV Board of Directors***By Dr. M. J. Gilsdorf*

I have been a member of NAFV since 1983. I joined because I saw the much needed assistance that NAFV provided to a colleague and I wanted the same support in case I needed it. Later in my career, I needed that support and it was great to have the advice, knowledge and experience of others to help me through the unexpected personnel issues. However, I also wanted to help the association that had helped and advised me. So I became an NAFV Representative in the Washington, DC area and assisted colleagues with issues. I also set up NAFV Chapter meetings where we all got together to socialize and discuss issues we were experiencing and developed recommendations for NAFV to take to the agency to resolve them.

I was then asked if I was interested in running for the NAFV Board of Directors. I was unsure what was involved but I knew that on the Board I would be working with a group of dedicated federal veterinarians, many whom I already knew; so I ran for the Board and was elected. I was later elected as President of NAFV in 1995 and have served in some capacity with the Board since then. Through these experiences, I have developed an appreciation for the benefits and advantages this volunteer effort has provided to me.

The first benefit I noticed was that I was able to expand my networking opportunities and to meet all types of people from around the country that I would have never been able to meet otherwise. I have developed long-term relationships of mutual trust and respect and developed professional support systems with many of them. This has been very rewarding to me both

professionally and personally. In addition, I learned so much by listening to their discussions on the topics we were involved in and that has helped me better understand the bigger picture.

I consider the members of the NAFV Board as a dynamic group of veterinarians who are dedicated to evaluating the association's member services and looking for ways to improve that service. The decisions made by the Board members can have an impact on the work of federal veterinarians around the world. They are 'Agents of Improvement' for causes that matter to us as federal veterinarians and as citizens of the United States.

As a Board member, I had the opportunity to gain valuable leadership skills such as decision-making, strategic planning, and consensus building, through hands-on practice. I added these skill sets to my resume when applying for positions and when participating in behavioral-event job interviews that might have given me an advantage over other applicants.

Serving as a Board member gave me a deep understanding of what non-profit governance is all about including financial responsibility, representing membership, volunteer management and planning for the future of the association and the federal agencies in which we work. Learning how to think beyond our local service area and for the long-term is an outcome of serving on the NAFV Board. Serving on the Board is a big responsibility, as boards are accountable for the viability of the association.

As a Board member, I became more aware of the association's mission, vision and goals, who are

(Continued on Pg. 5, EVP Column™)

(Continued from Pg. 1, "Association Letter")

products, and 38 trading partners have imposed partial, or regional, bans on shipments from states or parts of states with HPAI cases. (Congressional Research Service, 7/20/2015)."

Though the cost of the outbreak was high, it could have been much higher. Through the tireless efforts of federal veterinarians in APHIS the disease was contained to 223 flocks in fifteen states. Costs to the poultry industry and the American Economy would have been much higher if the disease spread to other parts of the country; especially the poultry dense areas on the east coast. Federal veterinarians strived to educate our trading partners about the disease and control measures in order to prevent countries from issuing trade bans and to reduce existing bans. Those efforts further mitigated losses to the poultry industry and the U.S. Economy.

The Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak demonstrated the importance of animal health surveillance and response. APHIS must be equipped to respond to animal health emergencies with a fully functional laboratory information system. The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) links federal, state, and university veterinary diagnostic and communicates results essential to the diagnosis of Avian Influenza and other animal diseases. During the HPAI outbreak, 16 of the 34 NAHLN laboratories performed 80,000 PCR assays and 1,000 virus isolations. Tests were completed within hours in order to ensure that flocks were depopulated within 24 hours. Further development of the NAHLN infrastructure, and dedicated full-time support for Information Technology (IT), are critically important to communication among NAHLN laboratories. The information technology support of the NAHLN system has always been incomplete and inefficient. Sustained multi-year funding is needed before APHIS and the states can hire permanent personnel to develop and maintain the necessary data collection and networking system needed to allow the test results to be sent and analyzed efficiently.

The Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak also demonstrated the importance of maintaining a veterinary workforce capable of responding to animal health emergencies. The Veterinary Services program in APHIS has lost more than 200 personnel over the past 5 years because of budget reductions. APHIS must be equipped with more permanent full-time veterinarians and veterinary technicians to effectively respond to future animal health emergencies. A [2009 GAO report](#) stated, "USDA and HHS veterinarians perform crucial work for public and animal health and for emergency response to an economically devastating or highly contagious animal disease." The same GAO report found, "...there is a growing national shortage of veterinarians."

The veterinary workforce shortage is not confined to one federal agency. The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), responsible for ensuring the safety of the nation's meat, currently has an approximate 11% shortage of veterinarians. Under existing inspection programs, it is not possible for FSIS veterinarians to perform all their routine food safety duties with this vacancy level. The veterinary workforce shortage is further compounded by current retirements. The GAO analysis revealed that, "27 percent of the veterinarians at APHIS, FSIS, ARS, Army, and FDA will be eligible to retire within 3 years" (GAO, Feb. 4, 2009).

Congress acted to address the veterinary workforce shortage with the Veterinary Loan Repayment Program (VLRP) and the Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP). These programs are a great start but they need to be supplemented and expanded. The NAFV requests your support of AVMA's, proposed \$1,500,000 increase to the VLRP and \$2,500,000 to the VSGP as well as AVMA's, proposed \$900,000,000 allocation for APHIS.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me if you have questions or would like to discuss these issues.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael J. Gilsdorf, DVM
Executive Vice President
National Association of Federal Veterinarians

Sixty Democrats ask Vilsack to delay new hog slaughter rule

Source: Food Safety News | By Dan Flynn | January 20, 2016

Sixty liberal and mostly urban congressional Democrats have weighed in with their opinions about making bacon, telling the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to further delay expansion of the 20-year old hog Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point-based Inspection Models Project (HIMP) pilot program.

Secretary Tom Vilsack, now President Obama's longest serving cabinet member, already won the right to expand HIMP to all interested poultry plants over vigorous opposition that built up over two decades. The USDA's new poultry rule was upheld by both district and appellate courts.

Vilsack's big win in the courts leaves USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service poised to issue a hog rule to expand HIMP beyond the five currently participating plants. A new hog slaughter rule would bring to an end the long controversial era of the HIMP pilots.

But the 60 Democrats who signed the letter to Vilsack say "its too early to expand this regulatory regime."

Led by Reps. Rosa L DeLauro, D-Conn., and Louise M. Slaughter, D-N.Y., the group of representatives say they support modernization of the food safety system, but "not at the expense of public health, worker safety, or animal welfare."

"We must improve hog inspection and reduce contamination from pathogens associated with port such as Salmonella and Campylobacter," they wrote. "However, FSIS has not demonstrated that its hog slaughter pilot program actually reduces contamination, and therefore illness, rates. To the contrary, the available evidence suggests the hog HIMP will undermine food safety."

A new hog slaughter rule is not on the White House's latest regulatory schedule, however. So, its possible Vilsack will leave hog slaughter to his successor.

"Before expanding the HIMP program to hog slaughter facilities across the country, FSIS should provide some assurance that removing government inspectors from these facilities, and relying on company employees to take over many of their duties, would not lead to process control shortcuts, increased fecal and other adulteration of meat products, higher incidences of microbial contamination, and ultimately, a rise in foodborne illness. Thus far it has not provided such assurance," the letter continues.

Like the poultry rule, critics say the hog HIMP pilot plants operate their production lines too fast and that too many duties previously assigned to USDA inspectors are being "privatized." Inspectors who are retired or who've sought whistleblower status are among the critics.

Play a game, prevent a disease outbreak

Source: Colorado State University | By Anne Ju Manning | February 03, 2016

Computer scientists and statisticians at Colorado State University are turning disease outbreak planning exercises into a game.

They're creating powerful new software that can predict, simulate and analyze a major disease outbreak – all in the form of an intuitive, multiplayer game.

Department of Homeland Security grant

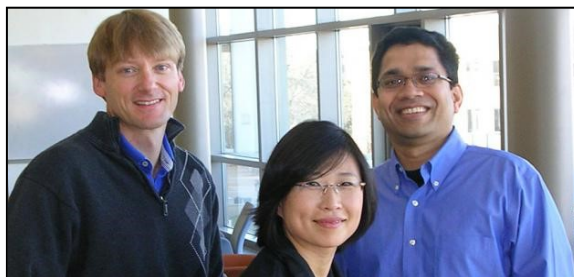
Researchers led by Shrideep Pallickara, associate professor of computer science in the College of Natural Sciences, are in year one of a three

-year, \$2.04 million Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate grant. The project is aimed at connecting the latest, greatest computing and data management technology to the fight against widespread livestock

disease.

Livestock disease outbreaks can spread far and fast across the U.S. From foot and mouth disease in cattle to avian influenza, the illnesses can wreak havoc on animals, the industrial food system and the economy.

"When a disease breaks out, you need to know – how severe is it? How long will it last? How many field personnel do you need? What are the economic consequences? How will commodity prices be affected? What will happen if you start vaccinating?" Pallickara said.



From left: Jay Breidt, Sangmi Pallickara and Shrideep Pallickara.

Credit: Lisa Knebl/Department of Computer Science
Photo by Colorado State University

(Continued on Pg. 9,
"Play a game,...")

(Continued from Pg. 2, "EVP Column")

members, demographics, upcoming events, key services, and the circumstances that other federal veterinarians face in other agencies. I also became aware of the other services that NAFV offers, like webinars, meetings in conjunction with the USAHA and AVMA meetings, lobbying, and getting to know the NAFV staff and legal counsel.

Serving on a Board of Directors allows the Board members to get their name out in the public. They are on the organization's website and in our newsletter. NAFV often asks Board members the opportunity to write articles, make presentations, serve on panels at conferences and be quoted in press releases. I am a member of several veterinary associations, and as a result of serving on NAFV's Board I was viewed as being qualified to serve on numerous oth-

er Boards or in other capacities for other associations.

Board service allowed me to join committees that provided experiences I didn't have in my government work. I picked up knowledge about corporate finances, meetings planning, communications, marketing and lobbying. After serving on a committee or two, I was able to lead as a committee chairperson. As I attended board meetings, I learned how to run them, which helped me eventually rise to the position of President.

Being an NAFV Board member has given me the opportunity to make a difference in our profession. Board service gave me a strong voice regarding the association's mission, policies and business practices. If you're looking to give back, board service is one way to do that.

Call for NAFV Board of Directors Nominations

This is an election year for NAFV Executive Officers and Board of Directors- which includes President-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, FSIS Board Directors (there are 3), APHIS Board Directors (there are 2), and one Board Director whom represents all other federal agencies.

This is a request for nominations. There are two ways members can be nominated for NAFV officer positions. One is by contacting the NAFV office to **request** your name be considered by the nominating committee and the position you wish to fill. If candidates for positions have not been submitted by petition or volunteered, the nominating committee may also be contacting members to determine if they are interested in being nominated.

The second way to be nominated is by **petition** - a member may be nominated for president-elect or secretary-treasurer by petition of at least twenty (20) active members submitted by July 1, 2016. Nomination by petition guarantees a slot on the ballot.

The terms of office are for two years beginning January 1, 2017. If you are interested in advancing your career, this would be a great way to gain leadership experience. The Board will meet in-person on in the spring of 2017 in Washington, DC and by conference call in 2018. Additional Board activities will be handled by conference calls when needed.

The responsibilities of the President include chairing the board of directors and the executive committee, appointing committees, appointing regional representatives, and authorizing expenditures in accordance with the general guidelines provided by the board of directors for conducting the affairs of the association.

The President-Elect will become the president upon completion of the 2 year term as president-elect and will serve as a member of the board of directors, and perform other duties appropriate to the office as directed by the president.

The Secretary-Treasurer assists the executive vice president in the development of the budget and in the record keeping of the financial records of the association, and assists in developing and presenting financial reports to the board or executive committee. The secretary-treasurer also approves all reimbursements to the EVP and keeps the minutes of board and executive committee meetings and submits them as a report.

The Board of Directors determines the actions and policies of the association by majority vote at meetings or by unanimous vote at other times. The Board of Directors is the ultimate governing body of the association.

Biographical statement of the candidates and voting ballots will be sent out in August this year and will be included in the newsletter. The ballots will be on the back page and can be torn out and mailed in to the NAFV office. In addition, the Board has approved voting by personal email. Additional information on this electronic voting process will be included in future newsletters and on the **www.NAFV.org** web site.

AVMA Legislative Agenda for the 114th Congress

The AVMA is working on a number of priority issues during the 114th Congress, which will end in December 2016. Below is a list of the initiatives that involve federal veterinarians. With any questions, please contact Dr. Michael Gilsdorf at mgilsdorf@nafv.org.

Antimicrobial Resistance & Antimicrobial Use in Food Animals

Legislation has been introduced for a number of the past congresses to limit the use of medically important antimicrobials in food animals. The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA; H.R. 1552) was reintroduced by Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY-25) in March 2015 and has 60 cosponsors. It was referred to the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Health. AVMA has been actively opposed to this legislation.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) re-introduced the Preventing Antibiotic Resistance Act (S. 621) in March 2015. While the title is the same as a bill from the 113th Congress (the Senate's version of PAMTA), this version is different. This legislation focuses on antimicrobials approved for use in the prevention and control of animal diseases which have the same or similar dosage levels as their previously approved growth promotion uses, no defined duration of therapy, or specify a dosage that is not expected to treat a specific bacterial pathogen. AVMA is in the process of reviewing this legislation.

FDA published a Final Rule on the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) in June 2015. A proposed rule to amend its animal drug regulations regarding VFD drugs was published in December 2013. AVMA has been very engaged with FDA throughout this revision and has recently developed resources related to the new rule.

The President released an Executive Order on Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria in September 2014 and called for \$1.2 billion in funding for FY 2016 for antibiotic resistance. The use of antibiotics in food animals is a component of this discussion. As noted earlier, AVMA is supportive of new funding for FDA and USDA to implement components of this strategy.

AVMA already has a Steering Committee for FDA Policy on Veterinary Oversight of Antimicrobials and a Task Force for Antimicrobial Stewardship in Companion Animal Practice. There also exists a strong desire to collect more data on the use of antimicrobials in animal agriculture, particularly as FDA attempts to measure the impact of their recent actions related to antimicrobial resistance (Guidance for Industry #209, which will increase veterinary oversight

and phase out the use of medically important antimicrobials in food animals for production purposes, and pending changes to the Veterinary Feed Directive).

Horse transportation issues

Currently only the transport of horses on double decker trailers going to slaughter is illegal. AVMA is seeking to ban transport of equine interstate on double decker trailers for any reason. The legislation, the Horse Transportation Safety Act (H.R. 1282/S.850), amends Title 49 of the U.S. to prohibit the transportation of horses in interstate commerce in a motor vehicle (except a vehicle operated exclusively on rail or rails) containing two or more levels stacked on top of one another. The American Association of Equine Practitioners is also supportive of the legislation.

Annual Federal Appropriations

The AVMA is actively seeking to secure funding for an array of federal programs and agencies that directly impact veterinary medicine, animal health and welfare, food safety, disease surveillance and public health.

- \$6,500,000 for the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program
- \$2,500,000 for the Veterinary Services Grant Program
- \$2,500,000 for the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank
- \$15,000,000 for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network,
- \$901,196,000 for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service,
- \$700,000,000 for the Agriculture and Food Research Institute,
- \$1,286,000,000 for the Agricultural Research Service, and
- \$35,000,000 for the USDA's strategy on Combating Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria (CARB).

In addition to these priorities, AVMA is actively engaged with coalitions working to bolster funding for food and agricultural research, biomedical research and antibiotic resistance.

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NAFV encourages you to obtain professional liability insurance. AVMA insurance DOES NOT cover personnel actions resulting from your federal employment. If you do not have professional liability insurance in place, NAFV can and will advise you, but cannot be your legal representative or provide indemnity protection if you are held personally liable in a civil suit.



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Mississippi State Chapter Meeting

By Dr. Kermit Harvey

On Saturday February 20, 2016 the Mississippi State Chapter of the NAFV met at the Mississippi State University's College of Veterinary Medicine for the Chapter's Annual Meeting. The meeting was brought to order. As there was no old business to address, the meeting proceeded to new business.

Current Chapter President Dr. Kermit L. Harvey, USDA-FSIS Jackson District DVMS, presented a financial report for the chapter.

Motions were offered and carried as follows (edited):

- The chapter is supported by the membership in continuing the annual NAFV state chapter annual meeting to be held in close proximity and date to the Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association's (MVMA) annual meeting. The meeting attendees requested consideration for available continuing education (CE) credits at both meetings.
- Additionally, the chapter supported Dr. Harvey to seek a mid-year meeting in a more central location.
- Meeting attendees discussed expanding the NAFV state chapter's meeting to become a collaborative effort for state and local regulatory veterinarians to receive training and more specific CE offerings.
- Engaging the MVMA Board to effect a move toward inclusion of federal veterinarian relevant topics by selection of speakers and topics for the general association's meeting agenda was addressed.
- Topics such as HPAI, zoonotic, and reportable diseases were discussed as being of interest to all veterinarians. Dr. Diana Care, USDA-FSIS, was nominated and accepted a liaison position to work with Deputy State Veterinarian Dr. Bridgid Elchos to address these issues for the chapter.

Elections for the Chapter- Dr. Kermit Harvey was re-elected President and Treasurer, and Dr. Joe Dees, USDA-FSIS, was re-elected Vice-President and Secretary.

Speakers- Dr. Ken Angel, USDA-APHIS and current NAFV President spoke on topics of the NAFV and APHIS actions and concerns from both a regional and national perspective. Dr. Bridgid Elchos, Mississippi Deputy State Veterinarian spoke on inter/intra state veterinary actions and emerging issues pertaining to the State Veterinarian's office, relevant topics to state and federal veterinarians, including reportable diseases, zoonotic diseases, and first responder and emergency preparedness training opportunities were presented.

UW–MADISON RESEARCHERS BEGIN WORK ON ZIKA VIRUS

CONTACT: David O'Connor, [608-301-5710](tel:608-301-5710), dhocomno@wisc.edu;
Thomas Friedrich, [608-265-3381](tel:608-265-3381), thomasf@primate.wisc.edu

MADISON, Wis. — In October, when David O'Connor last visited Brazil as part of a decade-long research program studying drug-resistant strains of HIV, one of his Brazilian collaborators had a request.

“He asked about using some of the technologies we have developed to look for new viruses to study some unusual cases of a birth defect, microcephaly, in the north of Brazil,” says O'Connor, a University of Wisconsin–Madison pathology professor.

The babies born with underdeveloped brains and small heads were the relatively quiet beginning of worry over the spread of Zika virus, concern that has grown louder outside Brazil with an international outbreak and emergency attention from public health officials around the world.

“At the time we didn't know it would explode into the public consciousness like it did,” O'Connor says. “But we did start planning.”

That planning will soon culminate in some of the first experiments studying Zika virus in monkeys, conducted by a broad UW–Madison team that includes the Wisconsin National Primate Research Center and expertise in infectious disease, pregnancy and neurology.

Pathobiological sciences Professor Jorge Osorio and research scientist Matthew Aliota, who were first to identify the Zika virus circulating in Colombia in October, provided essential Zika virology expertise. Ted Golos, professor of obstetrics and comparative biosciences, studies how other infections during pregnancy impact newborn health. The research group has extensive experience with viruses in humans and nonhuman primates — such as HIV and influenza — and their work will be conducted in secure facilities designed for the safe study of potentially harmful viruses.

Their work will start with basic questions about Zika virus infection. Very little is known about the virus even though more than 50 years have passed since it was discovered in the Zika Forest in Uganda.

Until recently, Zika was expected to cause little more than flu-like symptoms — the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists fever, joint pain and a headache — in about 20 percent of the people it infected. “That's why it's an understudied virus,” O'Connor says. “The viruses that get the most attention are the ones that makes us the most sick.”

The rapid spread of the virus and potential connection to an otherwise rare birth defect have drawn plenty of attention from the public and from government officials.

“People want clear answers, and we want to be able to make clear public health recommendations,” says Thomas Friedrich, a UW–Madison professor of pathobiological sciences. “There are a lot of countries in the tropics right now saying, ‘Don't get pregnant until 2018.’ That's not a sustainable public health recommendation.”

In January, the National Institutes of Health made Zika virus research a high priority, and the ground-work underway at UW–Madison led to NIH support for a series of studies of the virus in macaques, monkeys whose physiology and immune systems are similar to humans.

The researchers will track the effects of initial infections, but also try to establish whether one Zika virus infection provides some protection against future infection — like chicken pox does.

Zika does not mutate particularly fast, the feature of HIV and influenza that makes those viruses hard to pin down with vaccines (like HIV) and leaves people open to reinfection seasonally (like flu). This may make Zika easier to head off with a vaccine, but the best sort of immune response to provoke with a vaccine is not yet known.

“That's why we need to have data that shows what natural immunity looks like and the sort of immune responses that arise to protect an individual when they encounter that virus again,” O'Connor says.

Perhaps more hotly anticipated will be results from planned studies of Zika and pregnancy. “We strongly suspect Zika infection during pregnancy is associated with birth defects such as microcephaly,” Friedrich says. “But we don't know how strong the link is, or what percentage of women who get infected might give birth to children with birth defects.”

Or whether the timing of the infection during pregnancy matters. Or whether it is direct infection of a developing fetus by the virus or the immune response the infection sparks in pregnant women that causes problems like microcephaly.

“There are questions that cannot be safely and ethically addressed in humans that are absolutely vital,” O'Connor says. “What we will learn about Zika

(Continued on Pg. 9, “UW Madison Researches...”)

(Continued from Pg. 8, *“UW-Madison Researches”*)

from the monkeys will hopefully have an immediate application when figuring out how to deal with this from a public health perspective.”

Working with the Zika virus from the original 1947 discovery in Africa and from the ongoing South American outbreak — provided by UW–Madison Osorio and Aliota, who were first to identify Zika virus circulating in Colombia in October — the researchers also hope to identify any important

differences in infection by the different strains.

O’Connor also hopes results from the studies will help settle minds around the world, and help change the tenor of Zika news stories.

“The more hyperbolic the media coverage is, the more it gets repeated, reposted, retweeted,” he says. “The key messages are that we don’t know a lot. We will know a lot 12 months from now. But it’s really important we let data guide the decision making, not our guts.”

(Continued from Pg. 4, *“Play a game,...”*)

Hundreds or thousands of variables

Computer scientists are used to dealing with hundreds or thousands of variables and running what-if scenarios. The Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health, and other outbreak specialists such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, respond to emergencies by identifying a handful of scenarios. Then they can change parameters for each scenario – adjusting variables including disease biology and virulence – to help determine action plans for things like vaccine stockpiles, vaccine efficacy, and deploying field personnel. But that whole process can take hours or days; meanwhile, the disease spreads.

“In these cases, sometimes hours elapse between modifying your scenario, running it, and getting your response back,” Pallickara said. “What we do instead is, given a national scale outbreak scenario, we generate 100,000 variants, run them in a computing cloud that generates several billion files, and then do the analytics on

all this data. So even if a user is trying to change something in real time, we have already learned what will happen. This involves a lot of back-end processing, which allows us to make real-time predictions.”

Group gaming and why it works

Disease planners often work in isolation and don’t understand each other’s rationale or how decisions affect one another. This project tackles that problem by enabling collaborative decisions, allowing epidemiologists and state and federal officials to work together using a unique real-time planning tool – a multiplayer computer game called “Symphony.” A single-player version called “Sonata” will be released first. Why use group gaming to plan for disease outbreaks? Because concepts tend to “stick” better when people use them in game playing, the researchers say.

The idea is to put different decision makers – from policymakers to field agent and veterinarians – in each others’ shoes. The researchers envision all these constituents together in a virtual room, doing a planning exercise with the game and real-time visualizations, such as heat maps of potential dan-

ger zones.

Big data, stats and more

Also on the team is Sangmi Pallickara, an assistant professor in Computer Science, who is leading the big data component of the project – the management of about 1 trillion files. Jay Breidt, professor in statistics, will provide statistical models and expertise. Others on the team include a veterinary epidemiologist and an economist from Kansas State University, and a disease spread model designer. “From a computer scientist’s perspective, creating a disease outbreak planning tool introduces a host of interesting challenges,” Shrideep Pallickara said. Machine learning, statistical models and ensemble learning all become part of the process. And lots of computing power to crunch a petabyte of information over 10 million hours of CPU computing time.

“It is not enough for our tool to be accurate. It has to be useful. It has to be in real time,” Pallickara said. “The players – the DHS, the USDA, CEAH, state and federal officials – need to see a response in less than 100 milliseconds.”

<http://www.bovinevetonline.com/news/industry/play-game-prevent-disease-outbreak>

NOTE ON AVMA PLIT COVERAGE:

“Veterinary decision” as defined in the AVMA document does not necessarily mean the decisions made by PHV’s, SPHV, and others as managers in FSIS. The food safety decisions made in FSIS do not require a veterinary license, therefore, it is questionable whether the AVMA insurance covers any decisions made within the scope of being a federal employee. That is why the AVMA in the cover letter recommends their insurance supplement - and not replace - the FEDS insurance. The AVMA insurance should be purchased for federal veterinarians who perform clinical practice outside of the government.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FEDERAL VETERINARIANS

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NAFV BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

March 5, 2015

Executive Committee

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 Dr. Larry Davis, President-Elect
 Dr. Deanna Brown, Secretary Treasurer

General Counsel

Mr. William Hughes, Esq.
Executive Vice President
 Dr. Michael Gilsdorf

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 Dr. Roberta Morales, APHIS Alternate*
 Dr. Barbara Porter-Spalding, APHIS Alternate**
 Dr. John Sanders, Other Agency Rep
 Dr. Doug Meckes, Other Agency Alternate*

Administrative Assistant

Ms. Mariana Barros

*Not Present

**Present on phone

Call to Order

The National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV) Executive and Board of Directors meeting was held on Thursday March 5, 2015 in the Williams conference room of the Holiday Inn in Greenbelt, MD. The following topics were discussed:

Inactive Chapters

It was decided that the list of NAFV chapters should be reviewed and active and inactive chapters need to be identified. If any inactive NAFV chapters have remaining money in their bank accounts, it should be used to reinstate the chapter. Otherwise, the remaining money should be sent to the national office.

Representative's Involvement

The board recognized that they would like to see more activity within the membership and the NAFV Reps. It was discussed that the roles of the Reps have changed and an updated definition of the role and even the titles of the Reps be amended to reflect these changes.

Webinars

The NAFV's American Academy of Veterinary Preventative Medicine Committee is working on developing training and webinars for members. Mr. Bill Hughes has agreed to present a webinar on professional liability within the federal government.

AVMA's Report on Humane Slaughter

Dr. Larry Davis explained that earlier this year the NAFV found out about a report that the AVMA is publishing on humane slaughter. The NAFV was not included in the composition of the report, but was provided the opportunity to be an advisor to the panel and provide comments on its contents. AVMA is currently reviewing the comments.

AVMA Membership

The AVMA informed Dr. Gilsdorf on March 4, 2015 that NAFV did not meet the minimum membership of 500 AVMA members in order to remain in the AVMA House of Delegates. NAFV had 494 members as of early February. The NAFV was given until April 1, 2015 to increase the membership numbers.

EVP Report

Dr. Gilsdorf discussed the EVP Report issues:

Working to increase NAFV/AVMA membership to ensure NAFV remains on the AVMA House of Delegates.

Protecting federal employee benefits-through letter, coalition, phone calls, visits, and discussions with congress members

Managing the NAFV Budget

In 2014 the NAFV had an approved expected budget of \$195,050 with an actual income of \$180,872. This is a decrease in income of \$14,177.

Calling and meeting with federal veterinarians and NAFV representatives to develop topics and recommendations for agency coalitions and intra-management meetings.

Assisting the AVMA and Animal Agricultural Coalition in lobbying efforts to prevent budget reductions to veterinary-related programs in federal agencies.

Developing a new NAFV Brochure and assisting the AVMA and Center for Public and Corporate Veterinary Medicine in developing a brochure on "Opportunities for Veterinarians in Federal Service".

Updating the list of NAFV accomplishments to include the Top 50.

Writing, editing and publishing the newsletter with the editorial assistance of Dr. William James.

Participating in the Federal-Postal Coalition meetings with federal employee organizations to lobby and educate the media, citizens and congress about the critical roles federal employees provide and to help protect federal employee jobs, pay and benefits.

Hosting the NAFV Bi-Annual meetings and providing speaker and topics for discussion in conjunction with the AVMA and USAHA meetings.

Participating with the American Association of Food Safety Veterinarians (AAFSV) in organizing, co-sponsoring, and facilitating the food hygiene meetings at both the AVMA and USAHA conventions.

Updating the annual survey listing of the number and grade of federal veterinarians in the federal government.

Directing the federal Veterinary Workforce's

Talent Management Advisory Council (TMAC) in fulfilling the recommendations of the GAO to improve the retention, benefits, and recruitment of federal veterinarians.

Providing pertinent news items on the web page and Facebook and Twitter.

Partnering with the DCVMA and other State VMA's in the developing and hosting the public practice session of the Potomac Regional Veterinary Conference to provide the Public Practice Continuing Education Credits.

Awards

The USDA Awards Ceremony was held on November 6, 2014. LCDR Barbara Knust CDC was the Salmon Award recipient. Her plaque and monetary award were sent to her because she was on detail in Africa working with the Ebola outbreak.

Current Membership:

827 Active members: 507 FSIS; 277 APHIS; 26 DOD; 5 FDA; 5 ARS; 4 CDC; 3 DHS

We have a total budget of \$178,140. Using current membership dues and expenditure projections, NAFV will have a deficit of \$26,735 for 2015 unless additional expenditures are reduced or membership is increased. The BOD decided that a membership drive is needed to better inform those veterinarians who are not aware of NAFV and what it does in support of federal veterinarians. Until the membership numbers can be increased, funds from the reserve accounts will be used to cover the additional expenses if needed.

Press Releases

NAFV issued a press release on March 28, 2014 entitled; "The National Association of Federal veterinarians applauds Drug Company compliance with FDA request to increase veterinary oversight".

NAFV will continue to issue press releases when needed.

Status of NAFV Investments

NAFV has 3 investment accounts with T Rowe Price and 3 savings accounts with Wells Fargo Bank. At the end of December 2014 NAFV had \$242,777.17 in its investment portfolio. NAFV gained a total of \$18,614.98 in its funding reserves in 2014.

"Happiness and moral duty are inseparably connected."

-George Washington

Federal Veterinarians Protect and Improve Public and Animal Health and Welfare

VETERINARY HAPPENINGS

Notify NAFV of Promotions, Reassignments, Transfers, Awards, Retirements, etc. for members not listed in the "Veterinary Happenings" column so they may be included in a future issue. The following information was received by NAFV.

USDA FSIS Members

- Dr. Mohammad Jawid**, Waterloo, IA, Retirement 01/01/2016
- Dr. Timothy King**, Des Moines, IA, Retirement 01/08/2016
- Dr. Adanetch Gebreselassie**, Hurlock, MD, Promotion 01/10/2016
- Dr. Lindsay Chase**, Wyalusing, PA, Promotion 01/10/2016
- Dr. Alfredo Santiago**, Malone, TX, Promotion 01/10/2016
- Dr. Daniel Martin**, St. Joseph, MO, Retirement 01/29/2016
- Dr. Lorna Davis**, South West City, MO, Retirement 01/29/2016
- Dr. Rawhi Shamaa**, Strykersville, NY, Retirement 01/31/2016
- Dr. Steven Wilcox**, St. Cloud, MN, Retirement 02/31/2016

USDA APHIS Members

(Information will be available next month.)

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

Periodicals postage paid
at Washington, DC

Welcome New Members

- Dr. Joanna Davis**, GS-12, UGA '96, Conyers, GA, (Recommended by Christopher, Young)
- Dr. Robin Jordan**, GS-12, OSU '07, Idaho Falls, ID (Recommended by Edmund Blackler)
- Dr. Timothy Stevenson**, COL, TAMU '88, Burke, VA
- Dr. Denise Piaskowski**, GS-12, ORE '98, Silverton, OR (Recommended by William Pepper)
- Dr. Kelly Dowdall-Garberson**, GS-12, NCU '11, Lacey, WA
- Dr. Kara Butterfield**, GS-11, CSU '14, Ingalls, KS
- Dr. Hilary King**, AUB '12, Lumberton, NJ
- Dr. Ashley Alleyne**, GS-12, TUS '14, Missouri City, TX

Email Changes of Address to:
mbarros@nafv.org

Returned Checks
NAFV charges \$10.00 for checks returned
for insufficient funds