



FEDERAL VETERINARIAN

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REMINDER

Members,
Our new website has
tons of information
for you on:

- Upcoming CE
- Financial wellness
- Latest news
- Legislation tracking

To make sure you're
getting the most out of
your membership,
make sure that you
have access to our
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on our site. You'll be
able to access the
information listed
above & more.

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A Decade with Dr. Mike Gilsdorf Reflecting on his Legacy with NAFV

NAFV Looks on Back the last Decade with Dr. Mike Gilsdorf

Back in April 2018, after spending a decade spearheading our organization's efforts, longtime NAFV Executive Vice President Mike Gilsdorf took a step down from his position as EVP and continued to serve our membership as NAFV Senior Staff Veterinarian. Earlier this year, Dr. Gilsdorf decided to retire altogether.

To commemorate the achievements during his tenure with NAFV, and to be able to celebrate his work, we recently asked Dr. Gilsdorf to answer a few questions on his time spent supporting and advocating for the federal veterinary community.

NAFV: What encouraged you to join NAFV as EVP back in 2007?

MG: Before 2007, I had served on the Board of Directors with NAFV for over 15 years and served as President in 1995. I have been involved with helping NAFV most of my federal career because NAFV had helped me and so many of my colleagues over the years. In 2005, I was asked to be the new EVP when Dr Boyle left. I was not ready to retire then, so I assisted NAFV in hiring Dr. Valerie Ragan as a part-time EVP. Dr. Ragan left after two years because she had accepted a position as Director of the Virginia Maryland Center for Public and Corporate Veterinary Medicine. When Dr. Ragan left, I decided to retire from the USDA and started with NAFV the next day.

NAFV: When you joined NAFV, what did you see as the biggest issue that NAFV needed to be focused on?



Michael J. Gilsdorf, DVM

MG: Federal veterinarians have never been treated equally as medical professionals in the federal government. NAFV has helped significantly in improving the professional recognition and pay and benefits of federal veterinarians. Although, it has been a constant battle since NAFV was first organized in 1918; the biggest issue being equal pay. I worked hard to obtain equal pay while I was the EVP.

In 2008, two Senators asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review the federal veterinary workforce and make recommendations. I met with them and testified at a Senate Hearing in favor of making improvement to the workforce and was the first person that GAO met with when they were gathering background information. Their report caused the Talent Management Advisory Council to be formed consisting of representatives of all federal agencies employing veterinarians. I was also on the Council. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) lead the efforts. OPM

(Continued on Pg. 2, "Mike Gilsdorf")

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The annual subscription rate is \$50.00 for United States and Canada and \$70.00 for foreign mailing, payable by January 1 each year. Subscriptions are not available to those eligible for membership.

Any veterinarian employed full time by the federal government may become an active member. Dues are \$260.00 annually, payable annually, semiannually, PayPal (annually or monthly), or by federal payroll deductions (eligibility for payroll deduction is limited to USDA veterinarians --of \$10.00 authorized by signing USDA Form AD 1054 (FSIS) or SF 1187 (APHIS)). Uniformed veterinarians dues are \$160.00 annually. *Active duty* uniformed veterinarians-- please contact the NAFV office.

Associate membership is granted to active members when they retire from federal service. Associate members pay no dues. Associate members receive the NAFV newsletter by email.

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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(Continued from Pg. 1, "Mike Gilsdorf")

even hired me for a year part-time to lead the Council.

At first we made progress, (for example; the FSIS PHV vacancy rate dropped from 15% to 5% because of pay incentives that were offered) but the federal funding to implement the recommendations that were developed. It became clear that congress needed to provide direction and funding if improvements are to be made.

After 5 years, I helped to convince congress to have the GAO review the workforce again. They found the agencies had done very little to address the staffing and workforce issues. I asked the AVMA to join NAFV in getting professional pay for federal veterinarians and they agreed. Dr Davis was President when he authorized hiring a lobbyist to work with congress in getting legislation passed. We were successful in getting \$7.5 million for FSIS to use in hiring and retaining veterinarians. NAFV is still working with congress and the AVMA to obtain more permanent funding and to implement true professional pay. All other medical personnel in the federal government receive professional pay so we have a good precedent in asking for it. I also worked with the Veterans Administration and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta in helping them get professional pay. Dr Meinders worked on these issues as well. All these efforts are ongoing at this time.

NAFV: As you look back over the last 10+ years, what is your proudest accomplishment from your tenure with NAFV?

MG: *My proudest accomplishment is being able to protect existing benefits of our members because it directly affects their livelihood. For*



L-R: Dr. M. Gilsdorf, Dr. Joe Yearous, and General Counsel Mr. Bill Hughes

the past 10 to 15 years, many congressional members have constantly attacked federal benefits. I worked together with AVMA and various coalitions, to stop the dozens of introduced bills from being passed which would have eliminated or reduced federal benefits and pay. We were less successful at protecting the benefits of new hires. The second proudest accomplishment was convincing APHIS not to send veterinarians into dangerous areas of Mexico where people were being beheaded and tortured.

Another activity I am proud of was representing federal veterinarians on the AVMA House of Delegates. There were several times I had to speak up and provide input on how new policy ideas would negatively impact federal veterinarians and thus prevent those policies from being passed. I am also proud to have balanced the NAFV budget to keep NAFV intact.

NAFV: What are some of the biggest changes you have seen in the federal veterinary sphere over the last decade?

- *FSIS introduced a 5 year trial program called "pay for performance". It had been tried earlier by the Department of Defense and was discontinued. In the beginning most FSIS employees were opposed to it and the program had many problems that needed correcting. NAFV worked*

(Continued on Pg. 3, "Mike Gilsdorf")

(Continued from Pg. 2, "Mike Gilsdorf")

- with FSIS each year to improve this program. By the 5th year it was a good program and well-accepted by most; but FSIS decided it was too labor intensive and dropped it.
- AVMA was able to get the veterinary medicine loan repayment legislation passed for veterinary shortage areas. NAFV was able to get federal and public practice veterinarians added to it so they would qualify as well. This has been very helpful.
 - Over the past decade or longer I have seen a decline in the budgets of USDA field and research programs. This impacts the hiring and retention of all employees especially federal veterinarians. The pay gap has continued to get larger which makes it harder to hire new veterinarians into federal service.
 - Preparedness programs and staffing has declined in the past decade and we are less able to prevent and respond to disease outbreaks; this has already begun to haunt us.
 - OPM had its first government-wide veterinary workforce assessment, but agencies would not cooperate in addressing the issues identified; because of budget concerns. These issues still need to be resolved.
 - There has been continued attacks against federal employees by Congress and the Administration. (For example: The President's 2020 budget proposed cutting \$148.9 billion from federal employees pensions and asked federal employees to contribute more toward their retirement from their salaries.
 - Human Capital Officer positions were established in all agencies. It is still unclear if these positions will help resolve the personnel issues in federal agencies but these are individuals NAFV can work with.
 - In the past decade, FSIS and APHIS have fewer veterinarians in high level positions and they have fewer veterinarians overall. This has led to a decline in veterinary-type programs such as disease prevention, disease control, and meat inspection.

NAFV: Follow up, how do you think that has affected how NAFV supports its membership?

MG: It has made it more challenging for NAFV to support its membership because budget declines result in staffing declines at all levels. Agencies will not focus efforts on improving personnel issues un-



Pictured: NAFV Board of Directors 2011-2012

less they have the resources to do so.

NAFV: As you look at the future of veterinary medicine, do you see the role of federal veterinarians evolving?

MG: I have never been good at predicting the future. However, if we look at the past, it is clear that the role of all veterinarians and especially federal veterinarians, is constantly changing so it will continue to do so. Over one hundred years ago, most veterinarians were horse doctors because that was the primary power for transportation. Then, preventing the entry of foreign animal diseases into the country was a high priority followed immediately by eliminating foreign animal and zoonotic diseases from the country; federal veterinarians play a critical role in these activities every day. Meat inspection was the next important federal veterinary role and the best educated medical personnel to handle this task are still veterinarians. Research into disease prevention, vaccines, and other medical devices became an issue and federal veterinarians were well suited to work on solutions for those issues and have accomplished extraordinary advancements. Then, animal care became an important issue and veterinarians and federal veterinarians were key players in preventing animal abuse. I feel federal veterinarians could be used on many more emerging issues than they currently are being asked to help. They will always play critical roles because they are the only individuals who have well-rounded medical training in multiple species.

NAFV: Knowing what you know now, what would you say to a young veterinarian today about how to best prepare themselves for a long career in the federal government?

MG: I would give them the same advice I received from a colleague when I was a young federal veteri-

(Continued on Pg. 4 "Mike Gilsdorf")

(Continued from Pg. 4, "Mike Gilsdorf")



LR: Danny Gilsdorf, Michael Gilsdorf, Scott Gilsdorf, Ken Gilsdorf, Eirc Gilsdorf, and Dave Gilsdorf (sitting).

narian. Learn all you can and gain knowledge and experience in every new type of position you can. I looked for and worked on short details that allowed me to gain insights into other types of work that federal veterinarians perform. That allowed me to qualify for more higher level positions. But my exposure was limited. That is where NAFV members can take advantage of being a member by asking other members and the staff about opportunities in every agency. I didn't know when I was younger, that veterinarians worked in 26 different federal agencies. They are not only performing veterinary activities; they are work in most management fields as well because

they have the knowledge and training. There are a lot of very interesting positions available.

NAFV: What do you think is NAFV's most important function in support of its membership?

MG: NAFV is the only association that focuses on supporting federally-employed veterinarians; which is its most important function. This support is far-reaching into every type of issue affecting its members.

NAFV: Anything else you want to share about your time with NAFV?

MG: NAFV is only as strong as its membership; the more members we have, the stronger we are. NAFV was started by veterinary leaders in USDA (BAI) and later included other agency and military leaders as well. For more than 50 years, NAFV leadership was composed of primarily of top-level federal agency leaders. NAFV still has many top-level agency leaders as members. NAFV supports both management members and employee members because it focuses on how policies are written and explains the proper way to proceed. NAFV doesn't support one side over the other. This is a misconception of current managers because if they are not members they only encounter NAFV in employee disputes, where NAFV is advising the employee on the correct procedures to follow. This advice could also benefit managers in correctly handling many management issues.

Extinction Dynamics of the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Virus Carrier State Under Natural Conditions

Source: [Frontiers in Veterinary Science](#) | May 20, 2020

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is one of the most economically important livestock diseases worldwide. Following the clinical phase of FMD, a large proportion of ruminants remain persistently infected for extended periods. Although extinction of this carrier state occurs continuously at the animal and population levels, studies vary widely in their estimates of the duration of persistent infection. There is a need for robust statistical models to capture the dynamics of persistent infection for the sake of guiding FMD control and trade policies. The goal of the

current study was to develop and assess statistical models to describe the extinction of FMD virus (FMDV) persistent infection using data from primary longitudinal studies of naturally infected cattle and Asian buffalo in Vietnam and India. Specifically, accelerated failure time (AFT) models and generalized linear mixed models (GLMM) were developed to predict the probability of persistent infection in seropositive animals and identified carriers at the individual animal level at sequential time points after outbreaks.

The primary studies were analyzed by country and combined using an individual-participant da-

ta meta-analysis approach. The models estimated similar trends in the duration of persistent infection for the study/species groups included in the analyses, however the significance of the trends differed between the models. The overall probabilities of persistent infection were similar as predicted by the AFT and GLMM models: 6 months: 99% (AFT) /80% (GLMM), 12 months: 51% (AFT) /32% (GLMM), 18 months: 6% (AFT) /5% (GLMM), 24 months: 0.8% (AFT) /0.6% (GLMM).

[READ FULL RESEARCH ARTICLE](#)

Federal Veterinarians - Are You Prepared?



As you know, Federal Veterinarians are critical in ensuring the nation's food safety and animal/livestock health with innumerable food safety initiatives, guidelines through FSIS, APHIS, DHS, CDC, and FDA, and various animal health programs. Many federal veterinarians also have the dual role of a manager, supervisor or officer within their respective agency. **This leaves you extremely susceptible to allegations, complaints, or potential lawsuits- just for doing your job.** Are you emotionally, financially and legally prepared to become the subject of an adverse administrative action, disciplinary proceeding, or civil lawsuit?

The following is based off a real claims scenario from a federal veterinarian in which attorney fees totaled nearly \$115,000.

Picture this: You are the subject of an Internal Controls Staff investigation of employee accountability for the unsanitary conditions found at one of the meat processing plants you supervise, which had its operations suspended and resulted in the agency recalling over 50,000 lbs. of meat. The findings of the investigation lead the agency to propose your removal from federal service based on a charge of neglect of duty, alleging that you failed to perform your regulatory and supervisory duties at the meat processing plant. While you argue that your actions were consistent with sanitation guidelines, the agency maintains its position and issues a final decision to sustain that charge. You are forced to appeal and litigate your removal before the Merit Systems Protection Board, or risk losing your livelihood.

Without FEDS Protection:

You spend months paying out hourly fees to expensive federal employment attorneys in an attempt to defend yourself against the charges. The stress of the unknown begins to take a toll on your personal life, and as your savings begin to dwindle, you are forced to make the difficult decision to resign from federal employment in the best interest of your family's needs and finances and must begin looking for a new career.

Total out of pocket costs: \$112,702.04

With FEDS Protection:

You are assigned your own personal attorney specializing in federal employment law and MSPB appeals, paid for entirely by your PLI policy. Although it still takes months, your attorney handles all of the stressful paperwork and procedures, and succeeds in winning the appeal. You continue to be gainfully employed by your federal agency without loss in pay or grade and support your family as before.

Total out of pocket costs: \$280

The bottom line is, allegations are unsettling. If one is made against you - whether it comes from plant workers, special interest groups, politicians, members of the public, co-workers, subordinates or managers – the challenge is having the necessary finances and expertise to defend yourself successfully. FEDS Professional Liability Insurance provides you with both legal defense and indemnity protection against allegations arising from your federal position, so you can do your job with peace of mind.

FEDS Protection is Affordable:

\$1,000,000 Policy Limit; \$280 Annual Premium*

\$2,000,000 Policy Limit; \$380 Annual Premium*

50% Agency Reimbursement

All managers & supervisors are eligible for up to 50% agency reimbursement for a net cost of only \$140 per year.

***You must enter discount code "NAFV" for this pricing.**

Surplus lines taxes apply.

Your FEDS policy must be in place prior to any allegations or complaints in order for coverage to apply, so don't delay.

Enroll today at www.fedsprotection.com or call 866.955.FEDS.

EVP COLUMN

Photo Essay of the Delmarva Poultry Industry During COVID-19

by Joseph F. Anelli, June 2020

I took a few days off and went camping on the eastern shore of Maryland, but I didn't leave NAFV or our members far behind. As I drove toward the State Park we were camping at we came across these buildings:



Figure 1. Poultry house with trucks beginning to load out chickens.

It seemed everywhere I went I was seeing chickens coming:



Figure 2. Poultry truck with live birds heading to a slaughter plant.

And going:



Figure 3. Processed chicken health to the grocery store.

But the big eye opener for me was when I passed this scene:



Figure 4. Poultry processing facility with a mobile health unit and COVID-19 testing facility outside.



- Chicken Plants Take Center Stage in Delaware Coronavirus ...**
www.usnews.com › News › *Healthiest Communities*
 May 5, 2020 - A Perdue *poultry* and *chicken* farm is seen in Bridgeville, *Delaware* on May 2, ... industry has emerged as one of the latest hot spots in the battle against *COVID- 19*. ... Nearly 5,000 *Meat Plant Workers Infected* by *Coronavirus*].
- 'It's too late': Salisbury father, meat processing worker dies of ...**
www.delmarvanow.com › local › *maryland* › 2020/05/07
 May 7, 2020 - A Salisbury father and *poultry plant worker* died of *COVID-19*. ... As one *Virginia plant worker* told *Delmarva Now*, "If you

(Continued on Pg. 7, "EVP Column")

(Continued from Pg. 6, "EVP Column")

die, they'll have someone ... "A lot of our community are *infected* en masse around here,"...

• **Perdue, Tysons chicken plants: Larry Hogan gives ...**

www.delmarvanow.com › local › maryland › 2020/04/29

Apr 29, 2020 - Delmar Police Chief Ivan Barkley shares how the *COVID-19* pandemic has ... *COVID-19* cases associated with Maryland poultry workers. ... More: During the coronavirus outbreak, are *Delaware's* chicken plant workers able to stay safe? ... resident representatives and staff regarding *COVID-19* infections, ...

• **Maryland town traces spike in coronavirus cases to poultry ...**

www.baltimoresun.com › coronavirus › bs-md-salisbur...

Apr 29, 2020 - Salisbury made national headlines this week for its *COVID-19* case count. Local leaders say poultry workers make up the brunt of the infections. ... Maryland's Eastern Shore traces coronavirus outbreak to poultry plant workers ...

facility in Salisbury, with other nearby plants in Sussex County, *Delaware*, ...

• **Salisbury made a national list of coronavirus hot spots. How ...**

www.baltimoresun.com › coronavirus › bs-md-coronav...

May 15, 2020 - How many cases came from its poultry plant? ... identified the Salisbury metro area as one of the country's worst *COVID-19* infection sites. No one is saying how many plant workers or their families have died of *COVID-19*, ... union representing about 1,000 workers at a nearby processing plant in *Delaware*.

• **Hogan acts to curb Delmarva COVID outbreaks ...**

marylandreporter.com › 2020/04/30 › hogan-acts-to-cu...

Apr 30, 2020 - Perdue chicken processing plant (File photo courtesy of Perdue Farms). The outbreak of *COVID-19* infections among *Delmarva* poultry workers ...

AVMA Announces Virtual Convention for this Summer

This online event will bring the whole profession together to **reconnect, learn, and enjoy each other** while staying socially distant. Network with colleagues, make new friends, and meet other passionate professionals. If you're part of the veterinary community, you belong at AVMA Virtual Convention!

Choose from over **130 hours** of best-in-class CE courses, connect with colleagues, network with employers, and discover the latest veterinary products and services in a virtual exhibit hall.

Earn up to 21 hours of CE credit while learning from the profession's leading experts in a wide array of online formats. Expand your skills, gain practical knowledge, and get the latest information on the hot topics impacting our profession today.

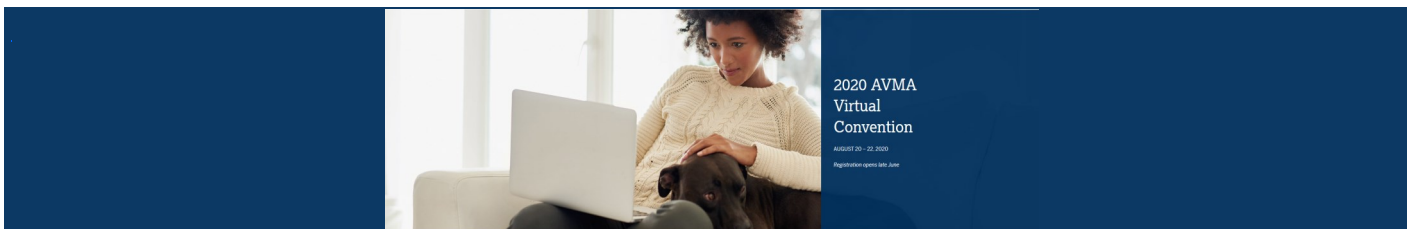
Find sessions in:

- Cannabis
- Companion animal medicine
- Food animal/equine
- Practice management
- Professional development
- Public and corporate practice
- Veterinary technology

Here's a sneak peek at some of the exciting events they are planning:

- Daily keynotes
- AVMA concert
- Virtual exhibit hall
- Alumni receptions
- Wellbeing activities

CE sessions will be available on demand to all attendees after the event.




USDA to Switch to a Two-tier, 'Pass/Fail' Employee Performance Management System this Fall



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Deputy Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

TO: All Employees

FROM: Deputy Secretary Stephen Censky 

SUBJECT: Performance and Awards System

DATE: May 6th, 2020

As we continue our work to be the most effective, most efficient, and best managed department in the federal government, I wanted to share with you our plans to move to a new two-tier performance management system and an accomplishments-based awards program for non-executives beginning in fiscal year 2021. This change will make the performance and awards process at USDA much simpler so that we can spend less time writing long, complicated performance plans and more time actually managing performance and rewarding employees. In the coming months, we will be finalizing a new Departmental Regulation outlining these changes, and I wanted to start talking to you about it now, so you have plenty of time to understand and prepare for the new system.

Through our OneUSDA initiative, we have been working the past several years to increase consistency across the Department for both our employees and our customers, and this is a continuation of that effort. Currently, most USDA employees are under a five-tier performance rating system. Under the new proposed system, there will only be two ratings: Fully Successful and Unacceptable. This new performance system will help provide consistency in how performance expectations are defined and how employees are rated. The success of this new two-tier system—and really to any performance management system—lies with employees, supervisors, and managers clearly communicating expectations and providing feedback on an ongoing basis.

Under the new awards program, monetary and time-off awards will be focused on employee contributions to USDA's mission, rather than employee ratings. This will allow USDA to recognize employee accomplishments throughout the year, instead of waiting until the end of the year to recognize a contribution that may be 6- or 12-months past.

A summary of the new performance management and awards draft policy can be found in the enclosure. We will be finalizing this policy in the coming months and providing additional details and training as we move towards implementation on October 1, 2020. Please note that the regulation will be implemented in accordance with terms and conditions of labor agreements and applicable statutory requirements. I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any questions, please reach out to your mission area or agency CHCO.


For more information, please see: <https://bit.ly/31hH5rJ>

NAFV @ WORK Federal Employees on the Front Lines

On this episode of FEDTalk, join host Natalia Castro to hear the stories of the federal employees working on the front lines while millions of Americans stay at home. From the Postal Service to Federal Veterinarians to the IRS employees delivering stimulus checks to the American people, federal employees are keeping the nation afloat during these trying times. Dr. Joe F. Anelli discusses the work that federal veterinarians have been doing during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Federal Employees on the Front Lines

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Senate Health Committee Chairman Alexander Says Congress Should Prepare This Year for the Next Pandemic

WASHINGTON, June 9, 2020 — Senate health committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) today released “Preparing for the Next Pandemic” — a white paper with five recommendations to address future pandemics based on lessons learned from COVID-19 and the past 20 years of pandemic planning:

- 1) Tests, Treatments, and Vaccines – Accelerate Research and Development
- 2) Disease Surveillance – Expand Ability to Detect, Identify, Model, and Track Emerging Infectious Diseases
- 3) Stockpiles, Distribution, and Surges – Rebuild and Maintain Federal and State Stockpiles and Improve Medical Supply Surge Capacity and Distribution
- 4) Public Health Capabilities – Improve State and Local Capacity to Respond
- 5) Who Is on the Flagpole? – Improve Coordination of Federal Agencies During a Public Health Emergency

“The five recommendations outlined above, along with a series of questions at the end of this white paper, are intended to elicit recommendations that Congress can consider and act on this year,” Alexander said. “I am inviting comments, responses, and any additional recommendations for the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions to consider. This feedback will be shared with my colleagues, both Democrat and Republican.”

The senator said that “In this internet age attention spans are short. Even with an event as significant as COVID-19, memories fade and attention moves quickly to the next crisis. That makes it imperative that Congress act on needed changes this year in order to better prepare for the next pandemic.”

He quoted a New York Times report on March 1 that said, “Much about the coronavirus remains unclear and it is far from certain that the outbreak will reach severe proportions in the United States or affect many regions at once. With its top-notch scientists, modern hospitals and sprawling public health infrastructure, most experts agree, the United States is among the countries best prepared to prevent or manage such an epidemic.”

“Even the experts underestimated the ease of transmission and the ability of this novel coronavirus to spread without symptoms,” Alexander said. “We continue to learn more about the science and trajec-

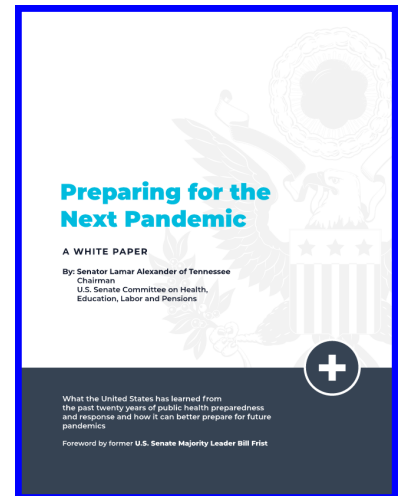
tory of this disease that is changing the response on a daily basis. In the midst of responding to COVID-19, the United States Congress should take stock now of what parts of the local, state, and federal response worked, what could work better and how, and be prepared to pass legislation this year to better prepare for the next pandemic, which will surely come.”

“During the past 20 years, four Presidents and several Congresses enacted nine significant laws to help local, state, and federal governments, as well as hospitals and health care providers, to prepare for a public health emergency, including a pandemic. Congress received many reports from presidential administrations, Offices of Inspectors General, the Government Accountability Office, and outside experts throughout those 20 years warning that the U.S. needed to address the following issues: better methods to quickly develop tests, treatments, and vaccines and scale up manufacturing capacity; better systems to quickly identify emerging infectious diseases; more training for health care and public health workforce; better distribution of medical supplies; and better systems to share information within and among states, and between states and the federal government.”

“Looking at lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis, many of the challenges Congress has worked to address during the last 20 years still remain. Additionally, COVID-19 has exposed some gaps that had not been previously identified. These include unanticipated shortages of testing supplies and sedative drugs, which are necessary to use ventilators for COVID-19 patients.”

Read the full White Paper including a Foreword by former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist [here](#).

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee is soliciting feedback from the public on the white paper until June 26, 2020. Feedback can be submitted to PandemicPreparedness@help.senate.gov.



FSIS Announces Voluntary Non-Competitive VMO Reassignment Program

The In-Plant Veterinarian Voluntary Reassignment Program gives in-plant PHVs and SPHVs the opportunity to submit your requests for voluntary, non-competitive reassignments to other OFO in-plant vacancies that you may be interested in now or in the future as vacancies open. FSIS also has some new changes to the program that will make it easier for you to submit your reassignment interests.

Eligibility

- You must be a current permanent GS-0701 in-plant employee in good standing
- You must complete one year at your duty station before reassigning to a new duty station
- You must be grade eligible
 - Currently hold a GS-0701/12 or
 - Currently hold a lower graded position, but have previously held a GS-0701/12
- If under a service agreement for a recruitment/relocation incentive based on occupying a hard-to-fill location, you must have completely fulfilled the requirements of the agreement(s)

How to Apply

- Complete FSIS Form 4335-3, listing the duty stations (city/state only) you want to reassign to. Requests to “county/state” or state will not be registered into the database
 - If you wish to be considered for only a day shift (D) or night shift (N) at a location, you must add “D” or “N” by that location in Block 7 of FSIS Form 4335-3
- Email signed FSIS Form 4335-3 along with your current resume, to the ‘VMO Reassignments – FSIS’ (VMOReassignments@fsis.usda.gov) outlook inbox.

Program Details

- If selected for reassignment through this voluntary non-competitive program, moving/relocation expenses will be the responsibility of the employee
- Submitted reassignment requests will remain in the database until selected for a reassignment. Once an employee receives a reassignment to one of their requested duty stations, the employee will be removed from the database
- If an employee declines a reassignment offer to one of their requested duty stations, that duty station (city/state) will be removed from the database
- Selecting officials are not required to select employees from the VMO Voluntary Reassignment List/database
- All Voluntary Reassignment requests must be submitted through the “[VMO Reassignments – FSIS](#)” inbox; the HROD team will not accept applications via fax, postal mail, or phone

VMOReassignments@fsis.usda.gov

Additionally, FSIS has published a list of currently available SPHV positions posted on their site:

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/careers>

This list will be updated each month.

Veterinarian-Sponsored Dog Importation Bill Introduced in Congress

Source: AVMA Blog | May, 20, 2020

This week, the [Healthy Dog Importation Act](#) was introduced in Congress to ensure that all dogs entering the country are healthy and not at risk to spread dangerous diseases that could adversely impact animal and public health.

To meet the U.S. demand for pet dogs, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that more than one million dogs are imported into the U.S. each year. An increasing number

of unhealthy dogs entering the U.S is alarming public and animal health officials, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic has crystalized concerns regarding zoonotic diseases.

Under current law, the importation of canines is overseen by the CDC and APHIS. Of the more than one million dogs imported each year, only about one percent are screened for diseases such as rabies, influenza, hepatitis, and distemper. This poses a seri-

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ous health threat not just to other dogs and household pets, but to our livestock and food supply. Current pet import rules can’t protect against this public and animal health threat.

Introduced by Reps. Ralph Abraham (R-LA), Kurt Schrader (D-OR), and Ted Yoho (R-FL)—all veterinarians—the Healthy Dogs Importation Act provides the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with additional tools to monitor and safeguard the health of dogs being imported into the U.S. The legislation would require every dog entering the country to be permanently identified, in good health, and accompanied by a health certificate issued by a licensed veterinarian accredited by a competent veterinary authority recognized by the USDA. The health certificate must certify that the dog has re-

ceived all required vaccinations and demonstrated negative test results required by the USDA. Those entering the country for resale, transfer, or donation must be at least six months of age and accompanied by a USDA import permit.

The bill would also streamline federal oversight, ensuring documentation and import permits are shared electronically between the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), CDC, and Customs and Border Patrol, while clarifying APHIS' key enforcement authority. These changes will help to ensure that the federal government is responsibly screening the large number of dogs entering our country each year, and that we are mitigating the spread of infectious diseases brought into the U.S by imported dogs.

[Read the full text of the Healthy Dog Importation Act](#)

FAO launches online training course on ASF preparedness in Asia

Source: [Far Eastern Agriculture](#) | May, 21, 2020

The Emergency Centre of Animal Disease (ECTAD) at FAO’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) is launching its first online training course on ASF preparedness involving more than 400 animal health practitioners from 19 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

This work is being supported by the The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Foreign Disaster and Assistance (OFDA).

In addition to the COVID-19 outbreak, with its devastating impact on the agriculture and agrifood sectors, African Swine Fever (ASF) continues to spread and threaten the livelihoods, food security and nutritional status of vulnerable groups in Asia and the Pacific region.

The main aim of the training is to reach and train veterinarians to optimally prepare, detect and respond to ASF. In the current situation, the online format is the best way to deliver the modules, easy to scale up and replicate. Moreover, it allows participants to learn at its own pace and time. Participants who complete all required tasks and pass the final course assessment will be awarded a certificate.

The training materials were originally developed for Eastern Europe and ECTAD-RAP has adapted them to fit into the Asia-Pacific context. Further technical support has been provided by the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD) through a virtual learning platform. The training commenced today and was opened by the regional manager of ECTAD-RAP, Kachen



Wongsathapornchai, followed by an interactive webinar.

The course is open for a duration of four weeks, a specific topic is covered each week using a discussion forum where participants and trainers can interact. There will be a second live webinar on 18 June and the course will end on 21 June. A final assessment test will take place during the last week of the course.

While not a threat to human health, ASF is a highly contagious and deadly pig disease that has already had a large impact on meat and feed markets in Asia. “To better prepare and respond to deadly diseases like African Swine Fever, it is essential to build the capacity of front line staff, such as veterinarians and animal health workers,” said Yooni OH, ECTAD RAP- ASF focal point for the region.

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