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ANNOUNCEMENT

NAFV, AVMA, along with the One Health Commission are collaborating on garnering support for the 2019 One Health Act.

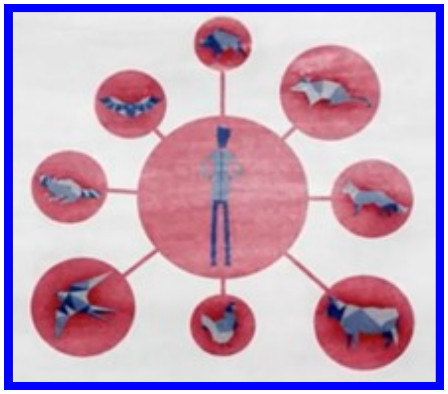
We are putting out a CALL TO ACTION to our respective memberships to contact your Congressional Representatives, on your own time and devices, to help us support this legislation.

You can use the template we have available through AVMA-CAN to submit letters to your representatives: https://bit.ly/32mjJOK

Inside this issue:

Special One Health Edition
Controlling Global Health Risks More Effectively

Against the background of increasing trade globalization, controlling and managing health risks can only occur through multi-sectoral collaboration; with well-structured and resilient health systems that prioritize prevention.



Global health risks and tomorrow's challenges

Diseases of animal origin that are transmissible to humans, such as avian influenza, rabies, Rift Valley fever and brucellosis, pose worldwide risks to public health that must be prevented and controlled.

Pathogens of animal origin that are not transmissible to humans, but which have a severe impact on the production of animal protein, should not be neglected either, particularly in developing countries. In fact, they can lead to production losses and a reduction in the available food supply, leading to serious public health problems caused by food shortages and protein deficiencies.

These risks are increasing with trade globalization, global warming and changes in human behavior, all of which provide multiple opportunities for pathogens to colonize new territories and evolve into new forms.

Preventing and controlling animal pathogens at their source

Past decades have shown us that preventing diseases at their animal source is still the most effective and economic way of protecting people. New models are needed to ensure early detection, prevention and control at the human–animal interface to reduce the persistent global threat of emerging animal diseases. Given the complexity of these diseases and their emergence and spread in a world that is becoming increasingly globalised, it is essential to find effective strategies to control them at their source to reduce their potentially devastating impact on health. This can be done by building upon the successes of the past, integrating new control methods and by entering into new partnerships to reduce future threats.

As a result of its standard-setting activities for animal health and welfare and because its mandate focuses on transparency in animal health in the world, the OIE plays a crucial role in preventing and controlling global animal health risks.

Within this framework, cross-sectoral cooperation at the national, regional and global level is a fundamental part of ensuring that our efforts are successful.

Through its actions, the OIE strongly supports initiatives to broaden the scientific basis of positive multi-sectoral collaboration, and to find ways to put the "One Health" concept into practice at the political and practical level.

Networking international scientific expertise

Swift and accurate identification of the pathogens responsible for animal

*(Continued on Pg. 2, **"Controlling Global…"**)*

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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 non-uniformed veterinarian employed full time by the federal government may become an active member. Dues are $234.00 annually, payable annually, semi-annually, or by federal payroll deductions (eligibility for payroll deduction is limited to USDA veterinarians--of $9.00 authorized by signing USDA Form AD 1054 (FSIS) or SF 1187 (APHIS)). Uniformed veterinarians dues are $150.00 annually. *Active duty* uniformed veterinarians-please contact the NAFV office.

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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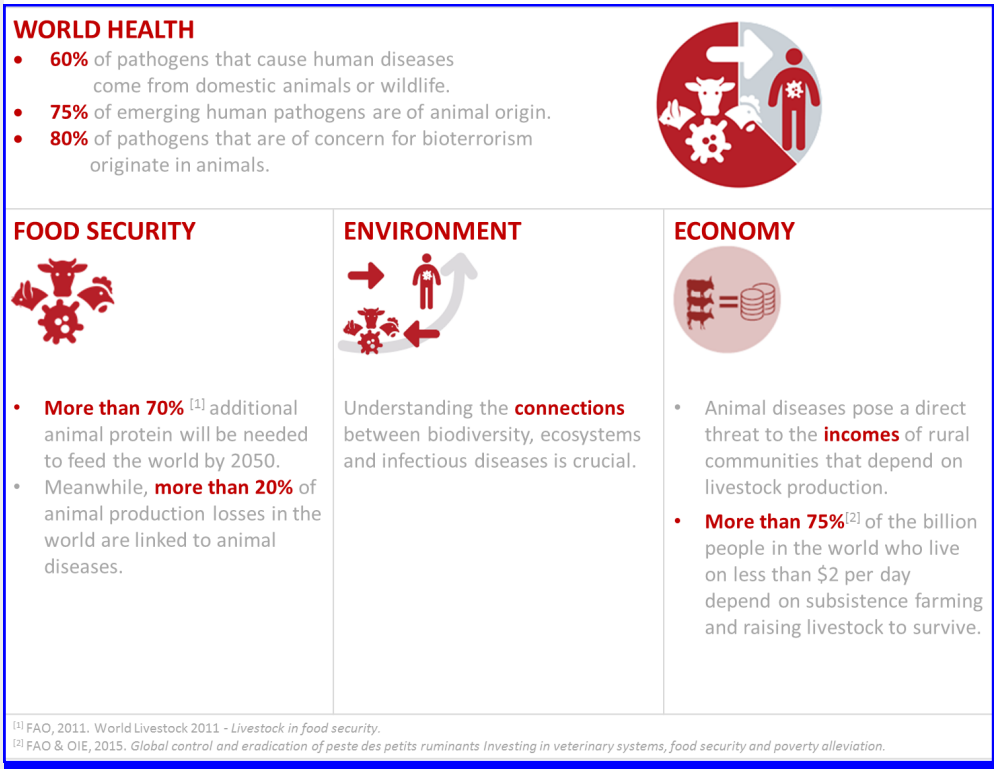
*(Continued from Pg. 2, **"Controlling Global…"**)*

diseases is an essential component in the early detection of disease. That is why the capabilities and reliability of national veterinary laboratories play a key role in controlling such diseases.

For many years, the OIE has been committed to capacity building and global networking among veterinary laboratories. In addition, it provides Member Countries with the skills and knowledge of more than 320 international centres of expertise, as well as programmes to build the capacity of their own national laboratories, particularly through its twinning programme between laboratories, and through training workshops.



Source for article & images: https://bit.ly/34CIhnU

EVP Report: October 2019
Dr. Joe Annelli

Did you know when you buy a cup of coffee it includes the cost of the milk? If you're drinking your coffee black you're giving up a valuable resource that should come with your coffee. Likewise the cost of your NAFV membership includes materials on the website. Did you also know that only 89 people have registered to gain access to the members-only section of that website? That's out of 733 active members and 275 associate members, or only 9% of our membership. Your paid staff is putting a lot of effort into posting what we think are valuable materials in the members only website areas. Just so I know that you're still out there how about going to the website and creating a login at https://nafv.org/m/login?r=%2Fmembers-only . Once you do, I'll make sure you are a member and grant you access. And since I've always enjoyed my job let's try to make this fun.

Once you have a username and password and have access to the website try to find the YouTube video on Prudential's financial wellness program. We are delivering the first of the on-site financial wellness programs in Riverdale, Maryland on

*(Continued on Pg. 3, **"EVP Column"**)*

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

November 12. Once we see how that one goes our plan is to expand that across the country. Prudential would like to have 15 people in attendance to make it worth their while to put on these seminars. So if you are in an area of the country where you can bring together at least 15 people - preferably more - please let us know, and we can begin to work with Prudential to put these seminars on for your local members and nonmembers.

Do you have a career development action plan? Do you know what a career development action plan is? Many of you probably have an annual learning plan (Individual Development Plan), but do you have a career plan? Find the answers to these questions and more on the website. And let me know what you think. Should we continue to expand this section? We're trying to look for things that you don't ordinarily receive from within the government, and bring in external ideas to expand your thinking about your career choices and opportunities. And lastly (since we can only really remember three to five things at a time) here is a third item - find the NPR podcast called "Deep Work". It's a 33 minute podcast that will explain why multitasking is really not a thing. It explains how to get your work done in a more efficient and effective matter. Again, I'm all about feedback. I would love to hear what you think of these things, and what more you would like to hear about.

Did you know November 3 was One Health Day? What did you or your office do to celebrate One Health Day? By the way, your One Health activity doesn't need to be on November 3. NAFV Celebrated One Health Day by establishing a policy to support the "Advancing Emergency Preparedness through One Health Act" and being part of the coalition that sponsored a tour of the "Outbreak" exhibit at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History for Members of Congress and their staffs.

And lastly, take a look at the minutes from our consultation with the administrator's office for an update on the activities that we discussed with them.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Notice of Determination; Changes to the Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program Standards

SUMMARY:
We are updating the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Herd Certification Program Standards.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Dr. Tracy Nichols, Staff Officer Cervid Health Team, Surveillance, Preparedness, and Response Services, VS, APHIS, USDA

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy of cervids (members of Cervidae, the deer family). Species currently known to be susceptible to CWD include elk, mule deer, moose, white-tailed deer, sika deer, muntjac, reindeer, and black-tailed deer.

In 2014, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) implemented the National CWD Herd Certification Program (HCP), a voluntary Federal-State-industry cooperative program administered by APHIS and implemented by participating States. Currently, 28 States participate in the program. States and herd owners choosing to participate must comply with the federal regulations, which include requirements for animal identification, interstate movement, fencing, recordkeeping, herd inspections and inventories, animal mortality testing, and response to any findings of CWD-exposed, -suspect, or -positive herds. APHIS monitors the approved State HCPs to ensure consistency with Federal standards. With each year of successful surveillance, participating herds will advance in status. Only captive cervids from certified herds for CWD may move interstate.

On March 29, 2018, we published in the Federal Register (83 FR 13469-13470, Docket No. APHIS-2018-0011) a notice of availability of a revised version of the CWD Herd Certification Program Standards. These standards provide guidance on how to meet the program and interstate movement requirements referenced above.

We received 334 comments. They were from producers, industry groups, representatives of State governments, and private citizens.

After reviewing the comments,

*(Continued on Pg. 4, **"Changes to CWD…"**)*

*(Continued on Pg. 4, **"Changes to CWD…"**)*

we made changes to the CWD Program Standards in order to address commenter concerns while maintaining program integrity. The revisions cover a variety of topics including: Adding guidelines for live animal testing in specific situations; clarifying how disease investigations should be handled; aligning with the regulatory requirement for mortality testing; simplifying fencing requirements; adding biosecurity recommendations; and describing the Agency's intended approach to update the CWD-susceptible species list. We also outline factors for determining indemnity and include a table with possible reductions in herd certification status that States may consider for herd owners that do not submit required mortality surveillance samples or consistently submit unusable testing samples.

The revised CWD Program Standards are in effect and may be found on the internet at https://bit.ly/2qprnKX.

New Swine Inspection System: an Interview with USDA's Dr. Mindy Brashears

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service announced the final rule approving the New Swine Slaughter Inspection System (NSIS) for the pork industry while increasing requirements for microbial testing at all swine slaughterhouses.

In an interview with **Meatingplace**, FSIS Deputy Undersecretary for Food Safety Mindy Brashears went into detail about the program, which has been some 20 years in the making.

Meatingplace: What are the pathogens you're concerned about with regard to swine?

BRASHEARS: We're always worried about salmonella. That has been the primary focus based on exploratory testing over the last couple of years. But as with any inspection system, we are looking at any and all hazards; not just microbiological but other contaminants, as well.

Meatingplace: Is the NSIS program more attractive to large or small operations, or does it matter?

BRASHEARS: NSIS is more suitable for larger, commodity operations because it increases efficiency. It may not be appropriate for the smaller operations because they just don't have the need for the higher line speeds.

One provision of the final rule that is standard for all facilities is the need for microbial testing. All facilities, large and small, have to demonstrate process control.

Meatingplace: The rule says that inspectors have the authority to slow the line speeds. Are there maximum line speeds incorporated in the NSIS?

BRASHEARS: In this version there is not a maximum line speed. In our five [HACCP-based Inspection Models Project] establishments (the pilot program for NSIS), they have been operating without line speed restrictions. Again, the inspectors can slow them down if needed, but all the data we've collected has been collected under [a no line speed-restrictions] scenario and indicate that [the changes don't] pose an increased threat to food or human safety.

We work closely with [the Occupational Health and Safety Agency] to make sure that safety regulations are met and we don't pose a risk to them. I have personally met with [OSHA representatives] and they have no concerns about worker safety under NSIS as well. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with OSHA on worker safety to make sure those issues are addressed.

Meatingplace: What has USDA learned from the New Poultry Inspection System that informed the swine version?

BRASHEARS: We have been under NPIS for a while (the final NPIS rule was enacted in 2014) and one of the most promising pieces of data is that we see there is a trend toward less salmonella in those NPIS facilities that have been under the system for a year. We also have gained an understanding of the implementation and training needs in the plant.

Meatingplace: How will inspector's jobs change at the facilities that adopt NSIS?

BRASHEARS: We have three

*(Continued on Pg. 5, **"Dr. Brashears…"**)*

*(Continued from Pg. 4, **"Dr. Brashears…"**)*

types of inspectors: DVMs; CSIs, or Consumer Safety Inspectors with more training and experience than food inspectors; and food inspectors who are on the line in the slaughter facilities. Under NSIS, we'll have only CSIs and DVMs. Our inspectors assigned to the facility will be the ones with more education and experience and training.

But we have 100% government inspection for both ante- and post-mortem (livestock) and that all will be done by CSIs. No inspection activities will be conducted by plant employees.

Meatingplace: Will the number of inspectors change?

BRASHEARS: That will change the number of inspectors at these facilities; there will be fewer inspectors but we'll have the more well-trained ones on duty. As for the hours of operations, that should not change. Inspection will be available whenever needed in a plant. That means we have the same need if not more to attract candidates for CSI positions and a lot of our open positions are with the vet inspectors. The NSIS program will not change the agency's needs in that area at all.

Meatingplace: Are there any special follow-up inspections on the calendar for, say, six months or a year after a slaughter facility has converted?

BRASHEARS: Not just follow up testing but ongoing testing for salmonella. We are moving toward salmonella performance standards for pork and those should be forthcoming in the months to come.

Meatingplace: In your mind, what is the biggest misconception about the new rule and the implementation of NSIS?

BRASHEARS: A couple of things. There's a misperception that plant workers will be doing inspection; that's absolutely not true, and reflects a misunderstanding of inspecting in general. Most people think of inspection as looking at the carcass, which yes, that's important and we'll still be doing that. But as we have moved toward a food safety focus, we are focusing our resources under modernized inspection on the food safety tasks and offline inspection. People don't talk as much about the offline inspections but that's looking at the sanitation records and data collected in the plant. These are the activities that we know impact pathogen loads and public health. We spend a tremendous amount of resources each year determining what offline tasks most impact public health.

We are focusing on that with our CSIs and that is how we will hopefully make the biggest change in public health and safety.

This article has been reprinted with permission from Meatingplace. Original article is available at: https://www.meatingplace.com/Industry/News/Details/87789?allowguest=true

CDC—Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

Notes from the Field: Zoonotic Mycobacterium bovis Disease in Deer Hunters — Michigan, 2002–2017

James Sunstrum, MD; Adenike Shoyinka, MD; Laura E. Power, MD; Daniel Maxwell, DO; Mary Grace Stobierski, DVM; Kim Signs, DVM; Jennifer L. Sidge, DVM, PhD; Daniel J. O'Brien, DVM, PhD; Suelee Robbe-Austerman, DVM, PhD; Peter Davidson, PhD

In May 2017, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services was notified of a case of pulmonary tuberculosis caused by *Mycobacterium bovis* in a man aged 77 years. The patient had rheumatoid arthritis and was taking 5 mg prednisone daily; he had no history of travel to countries with endemic tuberculosis, no known exposure to persons with tuberculosis, and no history of consumption of unpasteurized milk. He resided in the northeastern Lower Peninsula of Michigan, which has a low incidence of human tuberculosis but does have an enzootic focus of *M. bovis* in free-ranging deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). The area includes a four-county region where the majority of *M. bovis*–positive deer in Michigan have been found. Statewide surveillance for *M. bovis* via hunter-harvested deer head submission has been ongoing since 1995; in 2017, 1.4% of deer tested from this four-county region were culture-positive for *M. bovis*, compared with 0.05% of deer tested

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(Continued from Pg. 5, ***"MMWR on Zoonotic Mycobacte-***

elsewhere in Michigan. The patient had regularly hunted and field-dressed deer in the area during the past 20 years. Two earlier hunting-related human infections with *M. bovis* were reported in Michigan in 2002 and 2004. In each case, the patients had signs and symptoms of active disease and required medical treatment.

Whole-genome sequencing of the patient's respiratory isolate was performed at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa. The isolate was compared against an extensive *M. bovis* library, including approximately 900 wildlife and cattle isolates obtained since 1993 and human isolates from the state health department. This 2017 isolate had accumulated one single nucleotide polymorphism compared with a 2007 deer isolate (Figure), suggesting that the patient was exposed to a circulating strain of *M. bovis* at some point through his hunting activities and had reactivation of infection as pulmonary disease in 2017.

Whole-genome sequencing also was performed on archived specimens from two hunting-related human *M. bovis* infections diagnosed in 2002 (pulmonary) and 2004 (cutaneous) that were epidemiologically and genotypically linked to deer. The 2002 human isolate had accumulated one single nucleotide polymorphism since sharing an ancestral genotype isolated from several deer in Alpena County, Michigan, as early as 1997; the 2004 human isolate shared an identical genotype with a grossly lesioned deer harvested by the patient in Alcona County, Michigan, confirming that his infection resulted from a finger injury sustained during field-dressing. The 2002 and 2017 cases of pulmonary disease might have occurred following those patients' inhalation of aerosols during removal of diseased viscera while field-dressing deer carcasses.

In Michigan, deer serve as maintenance and reservoir hosts for *M. bovis*, and transmission to other species has been documented. Since 1998, 73 infected cattle herds have been identified in Michigan, resulting in increased testing and restricted movement of cattle outside the four-county zone. Transmission to humans also occurs, as demonstrated by the three cases described in this report; however, the risk for transmission is understudied.

Similar to *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, exposure to *M. bovis* can lead to latent or active infection, with risk for eventual reactivation of latent disease, especially in immunocompromised hosts. To prevent exposure to *M. bovis* and other diseases, hunters are encouraged to use personal protective equipment while field-dressing deer. In addition, hunters in Michigan who submit deer heads that test positive for *M. bovis* might be at higher risk for infection, and targeted screening for tuberculosis could be performed. Close collaboration between human and animal health sectors is essential for containing this zoonotic infection.

Picture & article source: ***https://bit.ly/2qovlTX***

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Food Safety and Inspection Service
[Docket No. FSIS-2018-0045]

Changes to the Salmonella Verification Testing Program: Proposed Performance Standards for Salmonella in Raw Ground Beef and Beef Manufacturing Trimmings and Related Agency Verification Procedures

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.
ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing and requesting comment on new pathogen reduction performance standards for Salmonella in raw ground beef and beef manufacturing trimmings.

The Agency is also announcing how it plans to assess whether establishments producing raw ground beef and/or beef manufacturing trimmings are effectively addressing Salmonella, using a 52-week moving window of FSIS sampling results and other related verification activities. Approximately one year (52 weeks) after the new standards are made final, the Agency plans to post individual establishment performance as either ``meeting'' or ``not meeting'' the pathogen reduction performance standard on the FSIS website, based on the most recent 48 Salmonella sample results.

Finally, FSIS is also announcing that it intends to increase Salmonella sampling to once per week in beef establishments that produce greater than 50,000 pounds of raw ground beef and beef manufacturing trimmings per day, so that a sufficient number of Salmonella samples (i.e., 48) are collected to assess these establishments' per-

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*(Continued from Pg. 6, **"FSIS-2018")***

formance against the new Salmonella performance standards. Note that FSIS will continue to analyze these beef manufacturing trimmings samples for Escherichia coli O517:H7 and applicable non-O157 Shiga-toxin producing E. coli (STEC); FSIS will continue to analyze these ground beef samples for E. coli O157:H7. Although unlikely with this change, if fewer than 48 samples are collected or analyzed in a 52-week window at an establishment, its status would be reported as ``N/A," provided the establishment has two or fewer Salmonella positives in that window.

FSIS will consider comments received on this notice before announcing the final performance standards in the Federal Register and assessing whether establishments meet them.

DATES: Submit comments on or before December 27, 2019.

Dr. Alfonso Clavijo Named Director of USDA National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility

Source: APHIS | 10/01/2019

Dr. Alfonso Clavijo has been appointed as Director of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF), a state-of-the-art U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) research and diagnostic facility designed to protect the nation's agricultural systems and stakeholders against serious animal diseases.

"Dr. Clavijo brings with him a wealth of technical knowledge in the diagnosis of transboundary, emerging and zoonotic diseases," said Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Administrator for USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). "As NBAF's first permanent director, his extensive leadership experience will be a great asset in helping NBAF achieve its vision of being a national asset that protects U.S. agriculture and consumers through cutting-edge, research, diagnostics, and development of vaccines."

ARS partners with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to operate NBAF. The facility is currently under construction with commissioning scheduled for completion in 2021.

Clavijo, who starts October 13, will play a key role in ensuring the smooth transition of responsibility from DHS to USDA once the 574,000 square-foot facility becomes fully operational in 2023.

Prior to his appointment at NBAF, Clavijo served as Laboratory Executive Director of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) National Centres for Animal Disease, which operates laboratories in Winnipeg and Lethbridge. As Director, Clavijo oversaw the administration of diagnostic services, related technology development and research to detect and prevent emerging and zoonotic animal diseases.

He also directed the management of biosafety level (BSL) 2-4 facilities that allow for the contained study of pathogens that cause foreign animal diseases, including foot-and-mouth, African swine fever, and highly pathogenic avian influenza.

Under Clavijo's leadership, CFIA's National Centre for Foreign Animal Diseases in Winnipeg was named by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as reference center for emerging and zoonotic pathogens.

Clavijo's leadership also earned him Canada's 2018 President's National Award in "Leadership in People Management." This honor cited Clavijo's exemplary people-management skills and his demonstration of excellence in advancing CFIA goals, values and ethics as a human resources manager.

Clavijo has held leadership or advisory positions at CFIA laboratories, as well as Kansas State University, Texas A&M University, the Pan American Health Organization, and National University in Bogota, Colombia.

Clavijo earned a doctorate degree in Veterinary Microbiology/Virology while attending the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, from June 1990 to March 1995 and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from National University in Bogota, Colombia, 1986.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS DIRECTIVE 10,100.1 Revision 1 10/29/19

FSIS CECAL SAMPLING UNDER THE NATIONAL ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE MONITORING SYSTEM (NARMS) SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE

This directive provides changes and updates to cecal sampling instructions to Public Health Veterinarians (PHVs) at slaughter establishments selected under the FSIS National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS) surveillance program The changes in this revision consist of updating the results reporting vehicle (to implement calendar year 2020) and the replacement of pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) characterization with Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS).

II. CANCELLATION

FSIS Directive 10,100.1 FSIS Sampling for the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS), 6/9/14

III. BACKGROUND

A. The NARMS is an interagency, collaborative partnership with state and local public health departments, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This national public health surveillance system was established in 1996 to track antimicrobial susceptibility among foodborne enteric bacteria from humans, retail meats, and food animals. The CDC NARMS program focuses on bacterial isolates from case-patients. FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) NARMS program focuses on retail meats, and the USDA FSIS NARMS program focuses on food animals at slaughter and processing through two sampling points— the non-regulatory samples that are collected from intestinal (cecal) content and selected regulatory programs to include carcass and food commodity samples. The FSIS and CVM NARMS programs include isolations of Salmonella, Escherichia coli (E. coli), Campylobacter, and Enterococcus spp. Additional information and web links are available on the FSIS NARMS web page.

B. In addition to monitoring antimicrobial susceptibility, the NARMS partners collaborate on epidemiologic and microbiologic studies and conduct research to better understand the emergence, persistence, and spread of antimicrobial resistance among foodborne bacteria. Additional information on the FDA NARMS program is available at The National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System. Information on the CDC NARMS program is available at National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System for Enteric Bacteria (NARMS).

C. The FSIS NARMS sampling program provides data on the presence and antimicrobial resistance profile of selected enteric microorganisms in food animal slaughter classes. As part of this sampling program, FSIS's Office of Public Health Science (OPHS) laboratory in Athens, Georgia processes samples of cecal contents collected by PHVs and tests for the presence of Salmonella, E. coli, Campylobacter, and Enterococcus spp. This FSIS laboratory performs the primary isolation and identification of these microorganisms and completes further characterization of the isolates to include serotyping, antimicrobial susceptibility testing and Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS). The resulting NARMS data is used to monitor trends in antimicrobial resistance and susceptibility among enteric bacteria in food animals and in FDA's CVM animal antimicrobial drug approval and evaluation processes.

NOTE: The routine PFGE approach for cecal and regulatory isolates was discontinued in March 2019.

D. PHVs will collect samples of cecal contents from the large intestines of swine (Market Swine and Sow), cattle (Dairy Cow, Beef Cow, Steers, and Heifers), Young Chickens, and Young Turkeys in FSIS-regulated livestock and poultry slaughter establishments. Additional slaughter classes may be included as determined through collaboration with FSIS's NARMS public health partners. Samples are to be shipped to the FSIS Eastern Laboratory for testing, as described in Section XI of this directive.

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.

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Agencies Get Even More Performance Management, Disciplinary Guidance from OPM

by Nicole Ogrysko | October 10, 2019

Agencies have even more new performance management guidance from the Office of Personnel Management this week.

This time, OPM is reminding agency leaders and managers that when it comes to disciplining employees, their own discretion, as well as the facts and history associated with the employee and his or her individual situation and potential violation, hold more importance than a suggested list of punishments.

Specifically, OPM is cautioning agencies against two concepts that have become common in managing and disciplining employees for poor performance and misconduct: progressive discipline and tables of penalties.

"Agencies should be mindful that neither the use of progressive discipline nor the adoption of a table of penalties is required by statute, case law or OPM regulations," OPM Director Dale Cabaniss wrote in an Oct. 10 memo. "Further, the use of the approaches presents challenges that agencies should consider prior to adoption."

OPM's latest guidance is particularly relevant, as agencies continue ongoing efforts to review and then update their performance management plans and implement all parts of the president's May 2018 executive orders on employee removals, official time and collective bargaining.

The injunction on those three EOs lifted earlier this month after more than a year of legal battles with federal employee unions.

The president's executive order on employee removals also clarifies agencies aren't required to use progressive discipline, OPM said.

Punishments for poor employee performance or misconduct should be based on the specific details of an individual situation, not based on arbitrary lists of possible offenses and correlated penalties, OPM said.

Like other recent guidance on performance management and employee discipline, OPM is careful to dance around existing collective bargaining agreements.

Some current agreements may include specific time limits or other requirements for disciplining bargaining unit employees, OPM acknowledged. Agencies must continue to abide by these agreements as long as they haven't expired, but these requirements must be consistent with federal statute.

"OPM strongly encourages agencies to review existing collective bargaining agreements to identify any provisions [that] conflict with these statutory rights and, whenever practical and appropriate, take steps to eliminate any conflicting provisions," the guidance reads. "Agencies should also avoid adopting any contract provisions in future collective bargaining that interfere with the exercise of management's statutory rights."

OPM's seven-page guidance is complex and often reads like an in-depth legal analysis, citing several past court precedents and previous studies from the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Agency managers have often deployed the concept of progressive discipline, which essentially gives employees multiple chances to improve their performance or address misconduct. Some managers may use performance improvement plans, for example, to document employees' performance deficiencies and set workers on a path to try to improve.

This isn't necessary, OPM argued, and it restricts agency managers from using their own discretion to consider an employee's work performance and past disciplinary history.

"The supervisor should also weigh any relevant aggravating and mitigating factors that may be relevant, such as the nature and severity of the offense, the employee's disciplinary record and years of service, the employee's potential for rehabilitation and applicable agency penalty guidelines," OPM said.

A table of penalties is a list of common employee offenses with a suggested penalty for each infraction.

According to OPM, agencies put effective management of their workforces at risk by relying too heavily on tables of penalties.

First, OPM argued, managers risk becoming too inflexible with these tables, impeding their understanding and consideration of other factors associated with an employee.

"A table of penalties does not and should not replace supervisory judgment nor should supervisors rely on this tool instead of using their best judgment, given the totality of the circumstances," the OPM guidance reads. "It is vital that supervisors use independent judgment, take appropriate steps in gathering facts and conduct a thorough analysis to decide the appropriate penalty. There is no substitute for management judgment."

If agencies do continue to use tables of penalties, they should specify them as "mere guidance" and remind managers the described punishments aren't meant to be an exhaustive or exclusive list of options, OPM said.

It's unclear how exactly agencies will take to their performance management policy reviews.

*(Continued on Pg. 11, **"Disciplinary Guidance from OPM"**)*

*(Continued from Pg. 10, **"Disciplinary Guidance from OPM")***

The Department of Veterans Affairs has sparred with the American Federation of Government Employees in recent years over the concept of "progressive discipline" during initial implementation of the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act.

VA began limiting performance improvement plans for some employees after Congress passed the accountability act back in 2017. AFGE at the time argued the department's new performance management guidance conflicted with the terms described in the collective bargaining agreement it had signed with VA back in 2011.

Source: https://bit.ly/33UyNEs

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 incorporate them into our next meeting. Please include your personal email address and cell phone number. All information gathered will be aggregated and kept anonymous.

Please submit consultation topics to nafv@nafv.org or mail to the address below.
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