



UPDATE:

NAFV EVP

Because of severe post-employment restrictions imposed on new NAFV EVP by the USDA Office of Ethics, Dr. John Shaw has resigned from the position that he has filled since July. The restrictions came as a surprise, and are so restrictive because he was classified as a USDA Senior Employee. They prevented him from performing critical duties of the position of NAFV EVP.

With any further questions, members are encouraged to contact the NAFV national office.

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OIE, FAO and WHO enlarge their collaboration commitment to face health challenges

Source: OIE

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have released their second [Tripartite strategic document](#) reaffirming their commitment to provide multi-sectoral, collaborative leadership in addressing health challenges. The scope of their collaboration will be enlarged to more broadly embrace the “One Health” approach recognizing that human health, animal health and the environment are interconnected

Paris, Rome, Geneva – October 13, 2017:

FAO, the OIE and WHO have been working together for years to address risks at the human-animal-ecosystems interface. Their collaborative work was formally laid down in [2010 in the FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite Concept Note](#), and on multiple occasions, the three Organizations demonstrated that bringing together their knowledge, insights and technical capacities in human and animal health, food and agriculture, can generate strong synergies, which will yield more robust, effective and cost-efficient solutions to the complex problems facing the world today.

Since 2010, the Tripartite partners concentrated their efforts on three main technical topics, antimicrobial resistance, rabies and zoonotic influenza, three areas of work considered as representative of the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration for effective risk management.

The achievements are today visible. The WHO Global Action Plan against antimicrobial resistance has been developed with the close collaboration of FAO and OIE, and the

Member Countries of the three organizations have committed to implement it at national level. In 2015, a Global framework for the elimination of dog-mediated human rabies has been adopted by countries, and has set the objective of reducing the number of human deaths to zero by 2030. And finally, the tripartite partners have been working hand in hand on zoonotic influenza for more than a decade, in particular thanks to the OFFLU network, improved global surveillance and information sharing with WHO experts to adapt flu vaccines to the current animal strains in circulation.

In parallel, in response to global events the organizations have also been working on a number of other topics that require multi-sectoral leadership such as [zoonotic Tuberculosis](#), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome – Coronavirus ([MERS CoV](#)), or tools and capacity building to help strengthen cooperation between human health and animal health systems and synergize capacity development of health services.

Building on these successes, the partners have recently decided to enlarge the scope of their collaboration.

The document “*The Tripartite’s Commitment: Providing multi-sectoral, collaborative leadership in addressing health challenges. October 2017*”, presents the way forward that the three organizations will follow to face the challenges of the future. While maintaining the momentum achieved for antimicrobial resistance, rabies and zoonotic influenza, the partners decided to enlarge their collaboration with a particular focus on:

(Continued on Pg. 2, “Facing Health”)

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(Continued from Pg. 1, "Facing Health")

- the reinforcement of national services in human health, animal health and food safety;
- the strengthening and modernization of early warning and surveillance/monitoring systems;
- the foresight, preparedness and response to emerging, re-emerging and neglected infectious diseases;
- the encouragement and the promotion of coordinated research and development to achieve a common understanding of the highest priority zoonotic diseases;
- the challenge that represents food safety requiring a multi-sector approach in the context of reinforcing food security.

This ambitious program will be supported by the Tripartite secretariat, in order to drive effective and efficient coordination of their efforts in each of the strategic priority areas through joint planning, moni-

toring and reporting. As such, the Tripartite aims to maximize collaborative work programmes in all its activities. Partnerships with other key stakeholders in health will also be promoted, as well as participatory community outreach and improved public awareness and risk communication.

Through this new Tripartite strategic document, FAO, OIE and WHO re-commit to developing and implementing multisectoral approaches to face complex health challenges at the human-animal-ecosystems interface. And through their leadership and coordination at the global level, the partners will continue to encourage and support similar collaborations in regional, national and local networks.

The Tripartite's Commitment:

http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Media_Center/docs/pdf/Tripartite_2017.pdf

FSIS Publishes the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System Cecal Sampling Program, 2014 Salmonella Report

Source: FSIS | 10/13/2017

FSIS published a descriptive report of antimicrobial susceptibility/resistance results for *Salmonella* for calendar year (CY) 2014, the first full year of cecal sampling, on its newly launched NARMS webpage. As a part of the NARMS program, FSIS collects samples of cecal (beginning of the large intestine) contents of swine (market swine and sows), cattle (heifers, steers, beef cows, and dairy cows), and poultry (young chickens and young turkeys) and analyzes them for the presence of *Salmonella* spp., *Campylobacter* spp., generic *E. coli*, and *Enterococcus* spp. It should be noted that the data provided in the CY 2014 cecal findings report are only focused on *Salmonella* isolated from the cecal content of the slaughter classes listed above. This report is intended

to complement the findings described in the 2014 NARMS Integrated Report and is available at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/c30a7a3e-a7ca-4850-813a-9565190767c6/NARMS-Salmonella-Cecal-Report-2014.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>.

Original Article: <https://tinyurl.com/yakfcnnw>

**Calendar reminder:
NAFV 2018
Calendars are here!**

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yours at
mbarros@nafv.org.**



Evaluation of Food Safety and Inspection Service's Equivalency Assessments of Exporting Countries

by Mariana C. Barros | NAFV | 10/23/2017

In September earlier this year, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of the USDA published a [report](#) on its audit of FSIS oversight and classification of foreign meat, poultry and egg products imported into the United States. The objectives of the report were listed as:

(1) Evaluating FSIS' determinations that the countries' food safety systems were equivalent to US standards,

(2) Evaluate FSIS' oversight to ensure that foreign systems remain equivalent, and

(3) Evaluate the effectiveness of the corrective actions implemented by FSIS in response to prior OIG audits in 2005 and 2008.

FSIS is responsible for monitoring and ensuring that meat, poultry, and egg products imported from a foreign nation provide an *equivalent* level of public health protection. OIG stated in their report *"Determinations of system equivalence are necessary for FSIS to develop and maintain the American public's trust of imported meat, poultry, and egg products."*

Once equivalency has been established, FSIS follows up with on-site visits, and conducts point-of-entry (POE) re-inspections.

The full report is available [online](#). Overall, OIG reported (1) inconsistencies in the officials' choosing of equivalent countries in need of auditing; (2) inconsistencies in officials' performance, completion, or documentation of audits; (3) FSIS lacks adequate policy to monitor, classify, evaluate, or determine equivalence of individual sanitary measures; and (4) FSIS does not obtain details identifying the actual date or reason why certified foreign establishments were removed from the program once they were deemed no longer eligible to export products into the US. Below are recommendations submitted by OIG, and their subsequent response from FSIS.

In response to the OIG report, consumer groups like the Consumer Federation of America have [expressed](#) serious concerns over FSIS' "ability to keep adulterated products out of the US once it makes an initial equivalence determination." NAFV will continue to monitor this issue and report any further findings and/or alterations to programming.

NAFV members: As members of the US Food Safety Infrastructure and American consumers, what do you think of OIG's findings? With any comments, contact mbarros@nafv.org and wjames@nafv.org.

Editor's Opinion

The USDA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a report earlier this month on FSIS equivalency assessments of foreign countries' food safety systems. The report can be summarized by the very first finding, "FSIS needs to strengthen its oversight of the entire equivalence process."

OIG found that FSIS doesn't consistently audit other countries according to agency schedules, and that auditors don't have sufficient guidance for conducting equivalence audits. In short, foreign audits aren't occurring often enough or thoroughly enough.

OIG thinks the agency's equivalence assessments have become tainted. How did it come to this?

In my opinion, the decline of equivalence determinations started when FSIS decided to dismantle the Office of International Affairs (OIA) about five years ago. OIA's component parts were scattered among other offices, with poor coordination of functions. The agency never provided a clear and cogent reason for eliminating OIA.

External observers think they can detect political influence on some equivalence decisions. For exam-

ple, many problems associated with the Brazilian inspection program have been identified at import inspection. Widespread corruption has been extensively reported within the Brazilian meat industry, implicating 1,800 politicians. Why does FSIS still consider the Brazilian inspection program to be equivalent.

On another front, the previous Administration assured some countries their Siluriformes fish exports to the United States would not be interrupted as a result of implementation of the inspection final rule 18 months ago. This was part of the U.S. posture for the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations from which we have now withdrawn. The process of initial equivalence is comprised of six steps, summarized in this FSIS overview. How long will the agency accept fish from countries that have not completed the equivalence process, or cannot?

FSIS needs an OIA.

NAFV members: With any comments, contact mbarros@nafv.org and wjames@nafv.org.

New Column: NAFV Millennial Committee Column

by **Dr. Brooke Henderson, Committee Chair**

This is the first installment of a new column about Millennials to attract, engage, and retain them in NAFV and federal agencies. Millennials are the generation of adults born between 1980 and 2000, approximately 17 to 37 years old.

This is the first time in history that 4 generations have been in the workplace at one time - Millennials (17 to 37 years old), Generation X (37 to 57 years old), Baby Boomers (57 to 75 years old), and the Silent Generation (aged 75 to 92 years old).

By 2020, **86 million millennials** will be in the workplace, representing 40% of the total work force¹. Characteristics of this generation include technological savvy, disdain for meetings, and preference to communicate electronically. Millennials are natives of smart phones, texting, and social media - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snap Chat, and FaceTime. Jobs that attract millennials give them the ability to work whenever and wherever they want. Other desirable job characteristics that attract millennials are variation on

the job, continual feedback from supervisors, opportunities to learn, retool, and reinvent themselves, challenge, new problems to solve, and to be in charge of their lives and future.

It will behoove us as managers and colleagues to listen, learn, and flex our styles to accommodate this up and coming generation.

¹ http://www.barrons.com/articles/SB50001424052748703889404578440972842742076#articleTabs_article%3D1

NAFV membership:

Comments, questions, solutions?

With any comments, please email mbarros@nafv.org



TB Partners Launch First Roadmap to Stop Transmission of Bovine and Zoonotic Tuberculosis

Source: FAO - <https://tinyurl.com/v8db2yem>

12 October 2017, Guadalajara - The first-ever roadmap to combat animal tuberculosis (bovine TB) and its transmission to humans, referred to as zoonotic TB, most often through consumption of contaminated untreated meat or dairy products from diseased animals, calls for close collaboration between those working to improve human and animal health. It is built on a One Health approach, addressing health risks across sectors.

The Roadmap for Zoonotic TB was launched at the 48th Union World Conference on Lung Health in Guadalajara, Mexico. Four partners in health, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) have joined forces to develop the roadmap and address the major health and economic impact of this disease.

New data released by the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 140,000 people fall ill and more than 12,000 people lose their lives each year to zoonotic TB - mostly in the African and the South-East Asian regions.

Bovine TB is most often communicated to humans through food consumption, usually non-heat-treated dairy products or raw or improperly cooked meat from diseased animals. Direct transmission from infected animals or animal products to people can also occur.

"This multidisciplinary roadmap represents a milestone in the fight against TB in both people and animals," said Paula I Fujiwara, Scientific Director,

But zoonotic TB is largely hidden. The advanced laboratory tools are required to diagnose zoonotic TB are frequently unavailable. The disease is resistant to pyrazinamide - one of the standard first-line medications used to treat TB. Patients are therefore often misdiagnosed and may receive ineffective treatment.

"We must recognise the interdependence of the health of people and animals in the fight against TB. Specifically, bovine TB, caused by *Mycobacterium bovis*, affects cattle, threatens people's livelihoods and results in major economic and trade barriers, as well as posing a major risk to food safety and human health," said Berhe Tekola, Director of the FAO Animal Production and Health Division.

Ten priority actions to tackle zoonotic TB in people and bovine TB in animals

IMPROVE THE EVIDENCE BASE

1. Systematically survey, collect, analyse and report better quality data on the incidence of zoonotic TB in people, and improve surveillance and reporting of bovine TB in livestock and wildlife.
2. Expand availability of appropriate diagnostic tools and capacity for testing to identify and characterize zoonotic TB in people.

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3. Identify and address research gaps in zoonotic and bovine TB including epidemiology, diagnostic tools, vaccines, effective patient treatment regimens, health systems, and interventions coordinated with Veterinary Services.

REDUCE TRANSMISSION BETWEEN ANIMALS AND HUMANS

4. Develop strategies to improve food safety.

5. Develop capacity of the animal health sector to reduce the prevalence of TB in livestock.

6. Identify key populations and risks pathways for transmission of zoonotic TB.

STRENGTHEN INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION

7. Increase awareness of zoonotic TB, engage key public and private stakeholders and establish effective intersectoral collaboration.

8. Develop and implement policies and guidelines for the prevention, surveillance, diagnosis, and treatment of zoonotic TB, in line with intergovernmental

standards where relevant.

9. Identify opportunities for community-tailored interventions that jointly address human and animal health.

10. Develop an investment case to advocate for political commitment and funding to address zoonotic TB across sectors, at the global, regional and national levels.

Addressing the animal health and socio-economic impact of zoonotic TB

The impact of zoonotic TB extends beyond human health. Bovine TB also threatens animal welfare and those with livelihoods based on livestock. The disease can economically devastate cattle production with losses related to animal production, markets and trade, as well as costs incurred to implement surveillance and control programmes. In order to eliminate the disease, domestic livestock found to be infected with bovine TB must be slaughtered under veterinary supervision.

(Article edited for length.)

NAFV Meeting Wrap-Up: National Centers for Animal Health September 7, 2017 | Ames, IA

Summary by Dr. Linda Schlater, NAFV Coordinator, NVSL One on One meetings:

The number of ARS animal researchers keeps dwindling because of a lack of adequate animal research funding. ARS used to pay veterinary researchers retention pay, but stopped many years ago and it has reduced the incentive for veterinarians to get graduate PhD degrees. ARS used to also provide employees support in getting a PhD but doesn't any longer. There is a desperate need for veterinary researchers in the United States and veterinary colleges do not emphasize that need.

There are currently only 14 ARS veterinarians at the Ames Iowa ARS laboratory.

At the VS laboratory in Ames:

- There is a lack of knowledge management within VS (lack of efficient handling of information and resources).
- Travel approval has become a nightmare within VS because of the layers of approval needed.
- The hiring process is micromanaged to a point that it takes too long to meet the agencies 80 day requirement. Why can't that be delegated with the hiring criteria spelled out?
- There is a lack of succession planning in VS. There are not a lot of DVMs being trained to replace personnel ready to retire.
- The laboratory had a serious shortage of pathologists at the time of the visit. However, NVSL recently acquired two pathologists so this issue is no longer critical.
- Some sections of NVSL have no developmental work being conducted anymore. However, the Diagnostic Bacteriology and Virology labs have several ongoing developmental activities.
- The scope of work at the laboratory has changed from just focusing on program work to now including whole genome sequencing capability and hiring bioinformatics specialists; doing more One Health collaborations with CEAH and CDC; and hiring a veterinarian to work on antibiotic resistance.
- There was more variety in the type of work, especially reference work in the past. They got submissions from zoos, did necropsies of all animals that died at this facility. That was discontinued years ago so the pathologists could concentrate on TSE and TB. The Bacteriology section also did more reference work in the past, but now are kept busy with One Health collaborations.
- The laboratory has staffing shortages in some sections because of budget cuts. This is causing difficulties in getting the work done in a timely manner.



NAFV Meeting Wrap-Up DELMARVA Chapter Meeting

by *Dr. Janet MacDonna*

The NAFV Delmarva Chapter held their 2017 Annual meeting on September, 30, 2017 in Salisbury, MD. SPHVs in attendance included: Drs. Ahmad Jilani, Naser Awad, Carl Profater, Muhammad Qadir, Munir Burriro, Adanetch Gebreselassie, Jena Highkin, Lindsey Ewing, Jonica Thompson, Janet MacDonna, Danielle Kellekamp (Harrisonburg Circuit), retired members Dr. Tina Ward and Dr. Emmanuel Gulab, FLS for the Salisbury circuit Dr. Brooke Henderson, FLS for the Hurlock circuit Dr. Catherine Banks, DDM in the Philadelphia District Dr. Lynda Lilyestrom. We were delighted to host Mr. William Hughes, Esq. General Counsel, and Chief Public Health Veterinarian for FSIS Dr. Pat Basu. Lunch at the Punjab Kabob & Grill Restaurant was excellent and expanded our palates. There would have been more attending, but several plants were operating on the Eastern Shore.

The meeting was opened by Dr. Jilani, started with a prayer and moment of silence for Dr. Abdus Qureshi, IIC at Milford, DE who passed away while on duty September 11, 2017.

Mr. William Hughes, Esq. General Counsel presented a discussion on the NAFV membership drive, and the recent activities of NAFV. The NAFV membership drive started on 10/01; the more Veterinarians the NAFV represents makes our voice stronger and therefore more successful. Membership packets will be emailed to the recently hired SPHVs. Recent working initiatives of the NAFV include working with AVMA to have SPHVs have an increased role and authority in Establishments, improving the consultation between FSIS and NAFV on person-

nel issues and to increase mentoring to new hires. Mr. Hughes encouraged the reading and sharing of the monthly NAFV newsletter to promote awareness. His discussion was well received and even long term members were

surprised that NAFV was doing so much. Dr. Jilani asked to discuss the overtime history for SPHVs as he was the part of the process. Most members were unaware that it was NAFV responsible for true time and a half. Many members expressed gratitude.

FLS for the Salisbury Circuit Dr. Brooke Henderson, led an interactive discussion about generations and the importance of not only recruitment but of retention of Millennials. Be on the lookout for the new Millennial column in the NAFV newsletter and increased social media presence. This sparked a lively discussion among members; reoccurring topics mentioned included increased mentoring and supervisory support for new hires, recognition of MPH or other advanced degrees or certifications, and stronger guidance from supervisors about operating within the bounds of the regulations, and improved training on supervisory skills. Dr. Henderson also stated that advancement opportunities are present in FSIS, es-



Credit Dr. Tina Ward

Description: Group photo taken after the completion of the 2017 Delmarva Chapter NAFV meeting pictured seated left to right: Drs. MacDonna, Jilani, Basu, Mr. Hughes, Banks, and Henderson. Standing left to right: Drs. Gulab, Gebreselassie, Burriro, Ewing, Kettlekamp, Qadir, Lilyestrom, Thompson, and Awad. (Not pictured: Drs. Highkin, Profater, and Dr. Hille-gass, Sec. Treasurer)

pecially for those willing to move.

FSIS Chief Public Health Veterinarian Dr. Pat Basu presented an informational discussion on his role in the agency and the role public health veterinarians play in the One Health emphasis. He is working to have two specialized trained FADD per District that would include SPHVs and not just District office staff. 75% of all emerging pathogens are zoonotic and we are on the frontline of protecting public health and disease recognition out in the field. The highest public health issue of concern is that of antimicrobial resistance. We as PHVs perform the NARMS test in conjunction with the FDA to test for resistance in establishments. A second pressing public health concern is that of organic production. There is a lack of veterinary input and qualified, quantified testing. Dr. Basu provided some links to informative One Health videos from the CDC and CNN. He encouraged everyone to work together, think outside the box, and seek additional degrees and certifica-

(Continued on Pg. 7, "DELMARVA")



Master of Preventive Veterinary Medicine (MPVM)



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

We offer core courses in epidemiology concepts, study design, research methods, leadership, ecosystem health, and infectious disease epidemiology as well as biostatistics. Electives allow students to explore zoonotic disease, food safety, diagnostic test evaluation, spatial analysis, mathematical modeling, disease ecology, and many more courses throughout the university. Coursework in ‘One Health’ incorporates public health and conservation at the interface of humans and animals. In addition to didactic instruction, students write a thesis on research they undertake. We support our extensive course offerings and student research with a large, diverse, vibrant faculty including recent hires in epidemiology, wildlife, food animals, urban agriculture, and poultry health, and a wealth of adjunct contributors from state and federal management agencies and organizations.

Instruction begins in early August. Requirements for entry include a minimum 3.0 GPA, and TOEFL score of 85 or higher for non-English speakers. The application deadline for the 2016-17 academic year is January 15th 2016.

Please send inquiries to Graduate Group Coordinator Ms. Tami Ali (tali@ucdavis.edu; 530-752-2657) or Program Chair Dr. Ashley Hill (aehill@ucdavis.edu).

Visit our website at <http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/mpvm/>

Occupational Animal Exposure Among Persons with Campylobacteriosis and Cryptosporidiosis - Nebraska, 2005–2015

Source: CDC | 09/15/2017

Authors: Chia-ping Su, MD; Derry T. Stover, MPH; Bryan F. Buss, DVM; Anna V. Carlson, PhD; Sara E. Luckhaupt, MD

Summary

What is already known about this topic?

Campylobacteriosis and cryptosporidiosis are two common causes of gastroenteritis, with incidence rates of 26.6 and ≥ 6.01 per 100,000 population in Nebraska, respectively. Although campylobacteriosis and cryptosporidiosis are primarily transmitted via consumption of contaminated food or water, they can also be acquired through contact with live animals or animal products, exposures which can be occupational.

What is added by this report?

During 2005–2015, occupational animal exposure was identified in 557 of 3,352 (16.6%) campylobacteriosis and 93 of 1,070 (8.7%) cryptosporidiosis cases in Nebraska in persons aged ≥ 14 years. Animal production (e.g., farming or ranching) was the most common type of industry among patients with occupational animal exposure, and cattle were the most commonly mentioned animal.

What are the implications for public health practice?

It is important that workers with occupational animal exposure be educated about symptoms of enteric diseases and prevention measures, which include using dedicated clothing at work and proper handwashing after touching animals.

FULL ARTICLE: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6636a4.htm?s_cid=mm6636a4_e

(Continued from Pg. 6, “*DELMARVA*”)

tions to move up in FSIS

FLS for the Hurlock Circuit Dr. Catherine Banks, closed the meeting with encouraging members to obtain FEDS Liability insurance and to utilize the resources which

NAFV and Mr. Hughes provide. Also, FSIS can be a career and to put yourself in positions daily where people recognize the quality of the work you do and your priority of protecting public health.

Thank you to all those who presented, traveled and attended the

meeting -- Stay involved. Good luck to Dr. Henderson on her upcoming deployment to Kuwait.

~Dr. Janet MacDonna, Secretary, Delmarva Chapter NAFV

FSIS Announces New Leadership in the Office of Public Health Science



On Oct. 5, 2017, FSIS announced that Dr. Kis Robertson-Hale had been appointed as the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Public Health Science (OPHS) in FSIS. Dr. Robertson-Hale started her career with FSIS in the Office of Field Operations (OFO) in 2003. For nearly 10 years, she has worked in OPHS' Applied Epidemiology Staff, most recently serving as Deputy Director.

Dr. Robertson-Hale's educational background includes a DVM from Tuskegee University, and a MPH from the University of Minnesota. She is also board certified in veterinary preventive medicine, which she obtained after receiving advanced training in CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service. Dr. Robertson-Hale is a Captain in the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service.

Source: [FSIS](#)

Are You Ready for Open Season?

by *Ian Smith* | *FedSmith* | 11/13/2017

With the 2017 Open Season for the Federal Employees Health Benefits program just getting underway, do you have all the information you need to make your health benefits decisions?

Open Season runs this year from **Monday November 13 to Monday December 11**. This is the time of year to ensure that you have the right health, dental or vision insurance coverage for you and your family. It is also time to consider the money you can save on your out-of-pocket medical and dependent care expenses for 2017.

The Office of Personnel Management has provided [information](#) which may help you as you consider these decisions, highlights of which are included below.

Has anything changed with my plan?

Find out if your health plan is one of the [plans leaving the FEHB in 2018](#). For dental and vision plans, no plans are leaving the program or changing service areas.

What happens if I do nothing during Open Season?

Unless your plan is leaving the FEHB, you will continue to be covered by your current health plan, but the premium may change. You will continue to be covered by your present dental and/or vision insurance plan. If you already have an FSAFEDS account, it will not continue automatically; you must reenroll. You can not enroll, change your enrollment, or cancel your coverage in these programs outside the Open Season unless you experience a [Qualifying Life Event](#).

What will my plan cost?

The average increase in the employee share of [FEHB premiums in 2018 is 6.1%](#). Keep in mind this is just the average, so some will be more and some will be less than that. You can see a listing of all of the plans and their monthly premiums

at [FedsDataCenter.com](#).

Where can I find information on the various plans

OPM provides a [plan comparison tool](#) based on your location that you may find helpful, and you can [browse plans available in each state](#).

Where can I go in my agency if I need more information?

If you need assistance or have more questions, contact your human resources office or your agency's shared service center. Your agency should have provided you contact information.

If after contacting your human resources office or shared service center you still need assistance, contact your agency's [headquarters level agency Benefit Officer](#).

Other resources

OPM also has provided the following documents with information and frequently asked questions about open season:

- [Open Season Checklist](#) – a list of items to help enrollees get ready for Open Season
- [Open Season Resources](#) – a list of resources to help enrollees find specific benefits information
- [Frequently Questioned Services](#) – a list of services that OPM often receives inquiries on as to how, or if, the items are covered under our benefit Programs

The list of articles from FedSmith authors included below also provides valuable federal benefits information which you may find helpful.

Source: <https://www.fedsmith.com/2017/11/13/ready-open-season/>

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REMINDER: It's NAFV Dues Renewal Time!

Cash paying members' dues and Associate subscriptions should be submitted no later than **January 31, 2018**.

More information on page12.

NAFV Coordinator Candidate: Dr. Kari E. Johnstone

Supervisory Public health Veterinarian, FSIS
Mt. Pleasant, TX

Dr. Kari Johnstone, PHV from the Dallas District and a graduate of LSU '07, joined federal service in 2000 and has continued to practice with a private veterinary practice since 2007. She describes her professional goals as “to utilize my public health training, work experience, veterinary expertise, extensive laboratory experience, excellent communication skills and effectively strengthen the community against the threat of disease to the animal and human population.”

Dr. Johnstone is looking forward to the opportunity to serve as a NAFV coordinator and serve as a mentor in student-loan forgiveness, and to regional PHVs in her area. NAFV is currently accepting members' comments on Dr. Johnstone's nomination as NAFV coordinator. To submit comments, please contact NAFV national office at nafv@nafv.org or 202-223-4878.



IMPORTED SEAFOOD SAFETY

FDA and USDA Could Strengthen Efforts to Prevent Unsafe Drug Residues

<https://tinyurl.com/yaccuzvm>

What GAO Found

To help ensure the safety of imported seafood from unsafe drug residues, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) generally depends on the actions of foreign processors and U.S. importers. FDA requires processors and importers to follow its Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) regulations to identify hazards and the critical control points where the hazards are likely to occur. FDA also performs a limited number of (1) inspections of processors and importers each year to ensure HACCP compliance, and (2) tests of imported seafood for contaminants, including unsafe drug residues. FDA could strengthen its efforts to ensure the safety of imported seafood from unsafe drug residues by pursuing agreements with other countries requiring that they test seafood exported to the United States for unsafe drug residues.

Under an agency plan, FDA is to coordinate with other countries to increase their capabilities related to the safety of food exported to the United States. FDA has used country agreements with respect to pathogen hazards in molluscan shellfish intended for export to the United States. According to FDA officials, it might be worthwhile for the agency to pursue agreements with some countries, which it has not yet done. In assuming responsibility for inspecting imported catfish, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) provided foreign countries and others a transition period—March 1, 2016, through September 1, 2017—before full implementation of its catfish inspection program. Following the transition, countries seeking to continue exporting catfish to the United States are to request equivalence determinations by providing documentation showing that their catfish safety inspection systems are equivalent to the U.S. system. FSIS could strengthen its efforts to ensure the safety of imported catfish. The Agricultural Act of 2014 directs FSIS, in part, to consider the conditions under which catfish are raised, domestically and abroad, but FSIS has not made farm visits a routine part of an equivalence determination. It is not clear how FSIS could consider the conditions under which imported catfish are raised consistent with the act without visiting farms.

In addition, during this determination, the agency will already have its inspectors in the foreign country for an on-site audit. FSIS officials generally visit government offices, commercial food processing facilities, and food testing laboratories in a foreign country. Without visiting a sample of farms whose catfish are exported to the United States, FSIS may be missing an opportunity to consider the conditions under which catfish are being raised. FDA and FSIS took steps to accomplish the transfer of catfish oversight from FDA to FSIS, as called for in the 2014 memorandum of understanding (MOU) that both agencies signed. However, they generally have not coordinated on drug residue testing methods, resulting, in some cases, in differences in drug residue levels used to determine if seafood is unsafe—specifically for unapproved drugs—as called for in the 1984 MOU. Without this coordination, the agencies do not have reasonable assurance that they are consistently protecting consumers from unsafe drug residues.

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How To Answer Tough Questions

by John Millen | 09/30/2017

We know from surveys that public speaking is the number one fear. From my work with hundreds of leaders every year, I can tell you that answering questions is a close second of serious fears.

Why are we so unnerved by the prospect of answering questions?

I believe there are many reasons for this fear, including:

Fear of the unknown.

Virtually any question might be asked and we will be on the spot in a high-pressure situation.

Lack of preparation.

Most people don't actually prepare, or know how to prepare effectively for questions.

No real confidence in our positions, our answers or our ability to respond.

Over-imagining the difficulty of questions and assuming our questioners will be antagonistic.

Fear of failure.

What if we can't answer the question? Will I be embarrassed, ridiculed, rejected? Fired?

It may seem as if I'm being extreme with these reasons, but be-

lieve me, I am not. From my intimate work with leaders, all of these may underlie our feelings of exposure. You may have felt some yourself; I know I have.

Early in my career, I became a media spokesperson and found myself doing live interviews on local and national television or talking to crowds of reporters about controversial subjects. I would also speak at public meetings with sometimes-hostile crowds.

Those experiences taught me what I teach others today: To handle questions effectively, you must be prepared, listen carefully, be present in the moment, and answer with confidence.

Here are some tips to help you when questions put you on the spot:

Prepare and Rehearse

As I have written before, the best way to deal with any communication situation is to prepare as much as possible in advance. You can't anticipate every question that will come at you, but you can prepare for most of them. You can

also be ready in a generic way for almost every type of question that will come your way.

Develop go-to messages

You should have an overriding theme — the one thing you want people to remember about your presentation. I also recommend having three key points that will serve as your go-to messages.

For instance, if you're doing a status update on a project, your theme might be, "Our product introduction is on target." You support that theme with three main messages, such as "we are on budget, on schedule and initial sales are on plan."

Pivot to your messages

Whenever you're asked a question, you should pivot back to your key messages that support your theme. It might feel odd repeating these messages, but it's necessary, given peoples' limited attention spans today. It will feel like repetition to you, but you're really reinforcing your main theme.

Just don't use exactly the same words as you say these messages:

(Continued from Pg. 10, "Answering...")

(Continued from Pg. 10, "Answering...") change it up by saying things a different way. Use different data, examples or stories to make your points. People won't think of you as repeating yourself, they'll think of you as someone who is clear on what you're trying to communicate.

Make a written list

I was trained in journalism in college and will share this formula reporters use to write news stories: In the first paragraph or "lede," journalists are supposed to include the who, what, where, when, why and how, so that people get all the information they need up front. You can use the same approach to develop your list of questions.

Take your topic and write every related question you can think of that might come up. For instance, if you are presenting to management about your product introduction, then consider questions like:

- *What* is the most important potential obstacle to success?
- *When* will we see results from this new product?
- *Who* is responsible for any delay in this product?

Add the toughest question

When you're done writing your list of questions, there's one more you need to add. I tell people to add the question that you don't want to be asked.

All of us have a question that is the absolute toughest in our minds. It's important to write that question down and also write down your best answer to get it out of your head and onto paper.

If you don't write it down, it will be swimming in your subconscious during your presentation. You may just be thinking, "don't ask *that* question, *please* don't ask that question." When the question is asked, your mind might go blank.

But if you've written down your answer—the best possible answer—you'll feel more confident and ready to answer the toughest question.

Don't get defensive

It's important not to let people [hit your emotional triggers](#) when you're answering questions. If that happens during a session and you get defensive, you lose. Maintain your confidence by maintaining your composure.

Don't dwell on a negative questioner

When someone in a crowd, such as in a meeting, essentially heckles you by posing negative questions, it's important not to let them steal the show. In other words, it's okay to answer a question or two from that person, each time going to your key messages, but then move on. Turn your gaze and your head to someone else, another questioner, as soon as possible.

Don't end your presentation on a negative question

Be sure to end your presentation on a positive note. You may have several negative questions in a row, but when you get to a positive question and you feel like things are wrapping up, it's time to end your talk.

I recommend having two

"closes" or final remarks for your talk. What I mean is, that first you summarize then open it up for questions and answers.

When the questions are over, hopefully ending on a positive question, again summarize with your theme and some of your key messages or call to action (your second "close") so that people walk away with what you want them to remember.

Don't Wait

The worst thing that people do is wait until the question is asked and then try to think of the answer -- under pressure -- and then smoothly give the answer. That's a really difficult feat to accomplish. It's no wonder that we feel anxiety when we're not ready to answer. Questions only become "tough" if you aren't prepared for them, or if you've inflated them out of proportion in your mind. In other words, even "tough" questions can be handled with confidence and grace, if you have the right mindset and have prepared to address the questions.

There is both art and science in answering live questions. Be patient with yourself. Like any other skill, answering questions takes focus, deliberate practice and repetition.

John Millen is a CEO presentation coach, speaker and author. John works with leaders and other high achievers who want to show the world their best, most authentic self. He writes on leadership, communication at personal development at www.johnmillen.com.

Source: <http://johnmillen.com/blog/how-to-answer-tough-questions>



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Former federal attorney, Anthony Vergnetti, Esq., Founder and President of FEDS Liability Insurance, explains to NAFV members why federal liability insurance is necessary for the modern federal veterinarian!

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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

(Information available next month)

USDA APHIS Members

Dr. Gath (Gary) Walker, Resignation, Lowell, MA, 09/13/2017

Dr. Kenneth Scheel, Retirement, Elkton, VA, 08/31/2017

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Welcome New Members

Dr. Patricia Laracuenta . FSIS, GS-12, SRG '15, Los Banos, CA

Dr. Jessica Daul, FSIS, GS-12, WIS '03, Green Bay, WI (Recommended by Dr. Michelle Kleppeck)

Dr. Harry Malinski, FSIS, GS-11, TEX '17, Bryan, TX (Recommended by Dr. Charles Edwards)

Dr. Kerry Garcia, APHIS, NCU '94, Apex, NC (Recommended by Dr. Roberta Morales)

Dr. Alethea Evans, FSIS, GS-12, MSU '09, Wilkes-Barre, PA

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