



FEDERAL VETERINARIAN

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ANNOUNCEMENT

NAFV Members:

We are currently looking for topic suggestions for our upcoming AAVPM CE webinars.

If you are interested in learning about a particular topic, please let us know ASAP! We will try our best to incorporate your suggestions into our CE plan.

In addition, if you are interested in providing a presentation on a topic in which you consider yourself well-versed, we would love to hear from you.

With topic requests and presentation suggestions, please contact our NAFV national office at:

nafv@nfv.org
or
202-223-4878

► Inside this issue:

CDC Food Safety Alert : Outbreak of Salmonella Infections Linked to Ground Beef Pg. 2

New Coordinator Candidate: Dr. Jessica Poindexter Pg. 6

FSIS Addresses Articles on New Swine Inspection System Pg. 9

GAO Report on FMD Pg. 10

Final EVP Column: Final Reflection from Dr. Marvin Meinders

NAFV Members,

I am coming up on my one-year anniversary at the National Association of Federal Veterinarians. This has been a really fast year. It has been an enjoyable year and I have had the opportunity to meet and work with a lot of really great people. However, by the time most of you read this article, I would have already departed NAFV at the end of April. My replacement will be Dr. Joseph Anelli who comes to us from APHIS.

One thing I would like to do before I leave is to pass along my perception of the challenges ahead for NAFV. The first and foremost challenge is membership. I think the best analogy of membership is that it is a barometer of the health of the association. With more members, NAFV will have better representations in the organization they serve, more members to support the organization when it pushes for legislative items that are important to Federal veterinarians, and a larger network to support fellow NAFV members. With more members, there will be greater income to the Association to add greater value to our members and better health of the Association.

The second challenge is mentoring our young. Overall our goal should be to develop and promote our young people into the future leadership positions of our profession. We need veterinarians in leadership positions so that they can lead the way for other veterinarian to be utilized at their optimum capability. What I have noticed at NAFV is that when I ask a more senior member to do something, their answer is frequently "I am too busy" or "do not have the time now". I even had someone to say they would do something, but never delivered

even though they were reminded three times. Whereas the younger veterinarians are enthusiastic and normally deliver what was requested.

It is hard to mentor our colleagues and build a network since overall the Federal veterinarians are small in number and are spread all across the US. But working with your colleagues should not be counted out since most of the young people today are very accustomed to and feel very comfortable using Skype, WebEx and other types of communication software programs. But we need to start our future leaders' program for Federal veterinarians ASAP. In the past it was stated that it took 20 years to develop a leader, but today with the quickly changing world, estimates are that we will need new leader that can work in this constantly changing environment with only 10 to 15 years of experience/training. We need to have veterinarians in every level of leadership. There is no one better than a properly trained and experienced veterinarian to lead a veterinary medical organization so we can stop turning over so many of our leadership positions to non-veterinarians.

The bottom-line. I personally like



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

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(Continued from Pg. 1, "EVP Column") summarizing with the bottom-line since it will help you focus on the most important things. I think the bottom line for NAFV is to start investing more in our young member's future, especially preparing them to become future leaders in our profession since our future lies in the hands of the young NAFV members. The question is how do we invest in the young veterinarians in the Federal Government? To this end, I offer the following suggestions:

1) The first and most productive way is to serve as a mentor to new employees and this can occur in many ways. It does not have to be an official program. It can be as simple as asking someone how things are going or seeing someone experiencing a difficult situation and just talking with them. The main thing in mentoring is to listen to them and actually care about their situation. You may be able to offer suggestions or may not, but if you just listen and care about them, it is very comforting to the individual and is normally encouraging to them. I think that if you have 10 years or more in the Federal Service, you should be able to mentor (help) someone who is just starting out in their career. The mentee should not have to seek you out, you can just start the conversation and make effort to follow-up, but respect their privacy and desires.

If they do not want you entering their space, then respect that.

2) Help develop our future leaders which is very important to our career field. Supervisors must encourage the young veterinarians as well as give them the opportunity to serve in leadership positions. These leadership positions can be community organizations, in State or locale veterinary organization, or in the NAFV Association. If your local area does not have a NAFV Chapter, I would recommend you to form one. The local chapter will accomplish several things for you and your colleagues: a) Build a local network with people that have similar interest and problem, b) Opportunity to discuss issues and become unified on issue such as the Chapter in California that is tackling their locality pay problems with their Congressional representatives, and c) Give the members opportunities to serve as a Chapter officer so they will gain leadership experience and can start building their resume for future jobs and positions. With these leadership experiences in your portfolio, you will be able to accept and serve honorably at the next level of leadership.

With these comments, I wish my fellow NAFV colleagues a fond farewell and best wishes for the future.

CDC Food Safety Alert : Outbreak of *Salmonella* Infections Linked to Ground Beef

Source: CDC | 03/22/2019

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service \(USDA-FSIS\)](http://www.usda.gov) External investigated a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Newport infections.

Public health investigators used the [PulseNet](http://www.cdc.gov/pulsenet) system to identify ill-

nesses that may have been part of this outbreak. PulseNet

is the national subtyping network of

At A Glance

- [Reported Cases](#): 403
- [States](#): 30
- Hospitalizations: 117
- Deaths: 0
- Recall: Yes

(Continued on Pg. 3, "Food Safety Alert")

(Continued from Pg. 2, “Food Safety Alert”)

public health and food regulatory agency laboratories coordinated by CDC. DNA fingerprinting was performed on *Salmonella* bacteria isolated from ill people by using techniques called [pulsed-field gel electrophoresis](#) (PFGE) and [whole genome sequencing](#) (WGS). CDC PulseNet manages a national database of these DNA fingerprints to identify possible outbreaks. WGS gives a more detailed DNA fingerprint than PFGE. WGS performed on bacteria isolated from ill people showed that they were closely related genetically. This means that people in this outbreak were more likely to share a common source of infection.

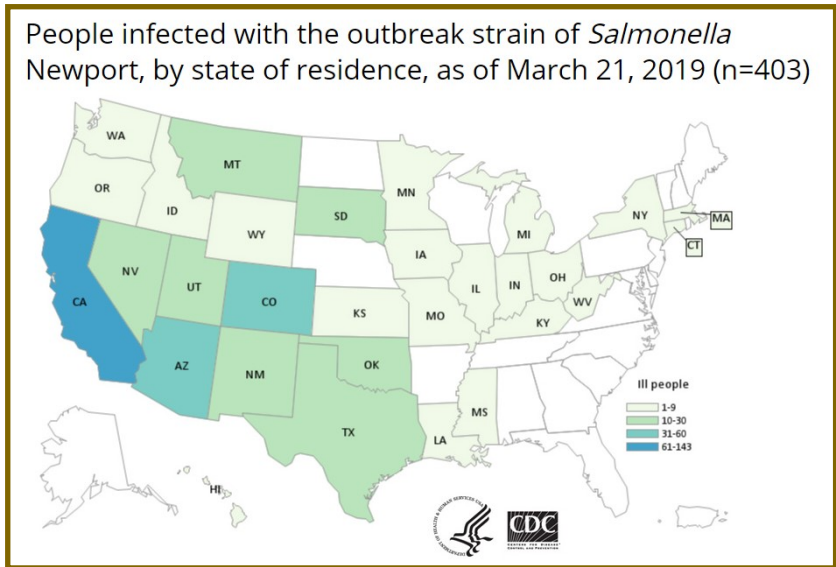
As of March 21, 2019, 403 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Newport were reported from 30 states.

Illnesses started on dates ranging from [August 5, 2018 to February 8, 2019](#). Ill people ranged in age from less than one year to 99, with a median age of 42. Forty-nine percent were male. Of 340 people with information available, 117 (34%) were hospitalized. No deaths were reported.

[Whole genome sequencing](#) analysis did not identify predicted antibiotic resistance in 403 *Salmonella* bacteria isolates from 398 ill people and five food samples. Testing of 17 outbreak isolates using standard [antibiotic susceptibility testing](#) by CDC’s [National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System \(NARMS\)](#) laboratory confirmed these results.

Investigation of the Outbreak

State and local health departments asked ill people [questions about the foods they ate and other exposures](#) in the week before they became ill. Of 277 people interviewed, 237 (86%) reported eating ground beef at home. This percentage is significantly higher than results from a [survey Cdc-pdf\[PDF – 787 KB\]](#) of healthy people in which 40% of respondents reported eating any ground beef at home in the week



before they were interviewed. Also, several unrelated ill people ate ground beef at the same events or purchased ground beef at the same grocery store chains, suggesting that the contaminated food item was served or sold at those locations.

Officials in Arizona and Nevada collected opened and unopened packages of ground beef from ill people’s homes. Officials also collected unopened packages of ground beef from retail locations. The outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Newport was identified in the ground beef. Whole genome sequencing showed that the *Salmonella* identified in the ground beef was closely related genetically to the *Salmonella* in samples from ill people. USDA-FSIS and state partners traced the source of the ground beef eaten by ill people in this outbreak to JBS Tolleson, Inc.

On October 4, 2018, JBS Tolleson, Inc. [recalled](#) approximately 6.5 million pounds of beef products that may be contaminated with *Salmonella* Newport. On December 4, 2018, JBS Tolleson, Inc. [recalled](#) an additional 5.2 million pounds of beef products.

As of March 22, 2019, this outbreak appears to be over.

Original article: <https://bit.ly/2vqzRlp>

NOTICE: USDA Scheduled to Partially Reopen the Miami Animal Import Center

Source: APHIS | 03/05/2019

USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will partially reopen the Miami Animal Import Center’s (MAIC) horse quarantine facility on March 11, 2019, after completing a thorough cleaning and disinfection. On January 19, 2019, the

facility was closed to new arrivals, after a handful of horses quarantined at the facility became sick.

At the time, veterinary experts suspected salmonella as the cause of illness, however, subsequent testing has not identified any causative disease agent present in the Center. APHIS officials took more

than 180 environmental samples at the facility and all were negative for salmonella. In addition, they tested the affected animals for a variety of diseases, such as E. coli, Equine Influenza, Equine Herpesvirus, *Aeromonas caviae*, Toxovirus, Coronavirus, Lawsonia

(Continued on Pg. 4, “Miami AIC”)

(Continued from Pg. 3, "Miami AIC")

intracellularis, Neorickettsia risticii, and Clostridium ssp and toxins. This testing has not pinpointed the cause of illness.

In total, eight horses quarantined at the MAIC became sick between December 17, 2018, and January 25, 2019, and all eight showed signs of lameness and received immediate medical treatment. Four of the horses died and the other four recovered. On January 16, 2019, APHIS announced

the temporary closure of the MAIC as a precautionary measure, but horses under quarantine were allowed to complete their stay at the facility.

Beginning, March 11, 2019, the MAIC will reopen three horse bays with a total of 36 stalls to provide quarantine services. The remaining four horse bays, with a total of 48 stalls, will remain closed while the flooring is replaced. The MAIC has a long history of safely quarantining import-

ed horses upon arrival in the United States. APHIS' number one priority is the horses' health.

The MAIC also has a separate quarantine area for birds. While no birds became sick, out of an abundance of caution, APHIS made the decision to close the avian quarantine facility for thorough cleaning and disinfection. The avian portion of the quarantine facility is expected to reopen in late March.

Original article: <https://bit.ly/2TAknDL>

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
9 CFR Parts 160, 161, and 162
[Docket No. APHIS-2017-0065] | RIN 0579-AE40

Administrative Changes to the Regulations Governing the National Veterinary Accreditation Program

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY:

We are proposing to amend the regulations governing the National Veterinary Accreditation Program by clarifying the veterinary programs for which accredited veterinarians are authorized to perform duties under the Animal Health Protection Act. We are also proposing to add or revise certain definitions and terms used in the regulations. The changes we propose would update the program regulations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dr. Todd Behre, Coordinator, National Veterinary Accreditation Program; National Animal Disease Traceability and Veterinary Accreditation Center, APHIS Veterinary Services; (518) 281-2157; todd.h.behre@aphis.usda.gov.

Background

Under the Animal Health Protection Act, or AHPA ([7 U.S.C. 8301 et seq.](#)), the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to protect the health of U.S. livestock by preventing the introduction and interstate spread of diseases and pests of livestock and for eradicating such diseases from the United States when feasible. The Secretary may also establish a veterinary accreditation program consistent with the AHPA, which includes standards of conduct for accredited veterinarians. The administration of this program, known as the National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP), has been delegated to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS). The NVAP allows private practitioners, once accredited by APHIS, to assist Federal veterinarians with performing certain tasks to control and prevent the spread of animal diseases throughout the United States and internationally.

Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), chapter I, subchapter J (parts 160 through 162, referred to below as the regulations) contains regulations for accreditation of veterinarians and suspension or revocation of accreditation. Part 160 contains definitions pertaining to the NVAP. Part 161 includes standards for accredited veterinarians, conditions for veterinary accreditation application, renewal, revocation and suspension, and provisions for program certification of accredited veterinarians. Part 162, subpart A, describes the scope and applicability of the rules of practice for proceedings for the revocation or suspension of accreditation of veterinarians as provided in parts 160 and 161. Part 162, subpart B, provides supplemental rules of practice for summary suspension or revocation of accreditation of veterinarians. Under subpart B, the Administrator may summarily suspend the accreditation of a veterinarian where there is reason to believe that the veterinarian has knowingly violated the AHPA.

Although we are proposing several changes to parts 160 through 162, none of the changes we propose to make imposes new regulatory requirements. The purpose of the changes is to clarify and update the NVAP regulations.

Dr. Raven Canady Recounts Her Experience as a FSIS Adel Malak Scholar

by *Raven M. Canady, DVM*

Every August, bright-eyed first year students arrive on campus. Many with well thought out plans and goals in mind – others who are going to figure it out as they go. In the middle of those two extremes you'll find the majority of students who have specific interests and goals but aren't really sure how to pursue them. This is exactly where I found myself during the Fall of 2014; I knew what I wanted to do, I just had no idea how I would ever get there!

Flash forward to the Fall of 2015 and I found myself in third semester of veterinary school or as it's known to students – “examageddon.” During the chaos of third semester was Dr. Bartlett's public health class. Dr. Bartlett would routinely bring speakers in from various agencies to share their experiences with students. One of these speakers was Dr. Jennifer Tolan, who works for the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA FSIS). Dr. Tolan discussed her position and responsibilities as a public health veterinarian. When she mentioned that FSIS was responsible for humane handling, she seriously had my attention. When she started talking postmortem examinations and pathology - I was hooked! I thought “wow, she gets to do two of my very favorite things in her day to day job.” I no longer felt obligated to choose one or the other...Dr. Tolan was proof that I could pursue both!

The following spring, I began scouring the USA-JOBS website looking for a summer opportunity, anything - just so that I could get my foot in the door. After a little searching, I found a posting for a Pathway's Veterinary Student Internship. The internships were scattered across the country; I found myself in Marshalltown, Iowa. The morning I left for Iowa, I'll admit, I had some serious butterflies. I had never really traveled that much on my own, never traveled to Iowa at all, and up until this opportunity presented itself; I'd never even heard of Marshalltown! That was a big leap for me personally, but it was absolutely necessary for my professional development. I experienced wonderful mentorship while in Marshalltown and learned invaluable lessons. That summer, FSIS announced the Adel A. Malak Scholarship Program for veterinary students interested in working for the agency. The Malak Program was brand-new and knowing that there would be a limited number of offers, I honestly thought my chances were slim. With a little encouragement from my mentor, I decided to go for it and throw my hat in the ring. I'll never forget the congratulatory phone call following recipient selection – it was one of the

proudest moments of my life.

As a Malak Scholar, I was able to travel to multiple establishments and develop a sense of what it was like to be a public health veterinarian. Perhaps the greatest benefit of the Malak Program was the extraordinary mentorship and coaching I received along the way. I had exceptional mentors, and this made all the difference. My mentors sacrificed their time to give me a leg up. They were all happy to coach me along the way and offer advice based on their experiences.

Following graduation, I converted to a full-time position with the agency. It's official – I'm a Public Health Veterinarian! My transition from student to veterinarian presented challenges; just as any other major life event. Most importantly, I am truly grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Malak Scholar Program, as it allowed me to develop fundamental skills that eased this transition phase and allowed me to move confidently into my new position.

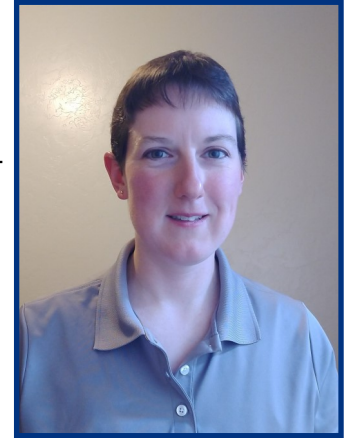
My current assignment with FSIS has taken me back to my home state of North Carolina where I serve as a Supervisory Public Health Veterinarian at the largest pork processing establishment in the world. A typical day brings in over 34,000 market hogs. The work flow is fast paced due to the high volume of animals moving through the establishment. Pathology, microbiology, and virology; it's all in a day's work! I can say that I truly enjoy my work; each day brings a new challenge and opportunity to stretch myself just a little more. I find it extremely gratifying to know that I am doing my part to ensure animal welfare and protect public health. I look forward to each day with great anticipation - I am excited to see what the future will bring as I continue my career with FSIS.



The Adel A. Malak Scholarship was founded by FSIS in their pursuit of ensuring that new PHV recruits understand the work that FSIS does to protect public health through food safety. This program was largely guided by efforts from Dr. Patty Bennett (now at AMS), longtime NAFV Board of Director member. For more information on the scholarship program, visit: <https://bit.ly/2DoUfq9>

Coordinator Candidate: Dr. Jessica Poindexter

Dr. Jessica Poindexter is running to be our next NAFV-FSIS regional coordinator for the state of Utah. Dr. Poindexter joined USDA FSIS as a Supervisory Public Health Veterinarian in May 2018. Prior to that, she worked as an associate clinical veterinarian at a small and exotic animal clinic in California after graduating from Washington State University's College of Veterinary Medicine in 2016. She also has a Bachelor's and Master's in Physics, completed a research internship with NASA as an undergraduate student, has done research on anthrax spores, and was a Captain in the US Air Force prior to separating to return to school to study veterinary medicine. Her interests are in public health, parasites, infectious disease, and avian pathology and medicine. She currently resides in Utah, where she works at a turkey plant. Comments to the NAFV national office (nafv@nafv.org) for Dr. Poindexter will be accepted through the end of April.



USDA Updates Scrapie Regulations and Program Standards

Source: APHIS | 03/22/2019

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS) is updating its scrapie regulations and program standards. These updates include several major changes, which are needed to continue the fight to eradicate scrapie from U.S. sheep flocks and goat herds. Scrapie is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) disease that affects the central nervous system in sheep and goats, and is eventually fatal.

The changes APHIS is making today to update the program are supported by the sheep and goat industry and incorporate the latest science to provide APHIS with increased flexibility as we work together with producers to get rid of this disease.

Scientific studies show that sheep with certain genotypes are resistant to or less susceptible to classical scrapie and are unlikely to get the disease. Because of this, APHIS is changing the definition of a scrapie high-risk animal so that it no longer includes most genetically-resistant and genetically less susceptible sheep. These animals pose a minimal risk of developing or transmitting scrapie, and by no longer considering them high-risk, they will no longer need

to be depopulated or permanently restricted to their home farm. The updated regulations and program standards will give the agency's epidemiologists and leadership more flexibility to determine flock designations and deal with scrapie types that pose a minimal risk of spreading, including Nor-98 like scrapie. It also allows APHIS to determine based on science that additional genotypes are resistant without going through rule making. This will allow science and experience to guide decision-making as we identify fewer and fewer cases and move toward eradication.

APHIS is also updating specific identification requirements for goats and certain recordkeeping requirements for sheep and goats, which will provide increased animal disease traceability. Traceability is provided for certain classes of sheep and goats by the scrapie program, but strengthening traceability, particularly for goats, is important. This rule will bring goat identification and record-keeping requirements up to the level of the sheep industry, improving slaughter surveillance. Official identification will now be required for goats 18 months of age or older and for all sexually-intact goats under 18 months of age moving for purpos-

es other than slaughter or feeding for slaughter, with some exceptions. Both industries will see recordkeeping changes. Sheep and goats moving in slaughter channels will now be required to have an owner/shipper statement. This statement must include group/lot identification, unless the animals are individually identified with official tags.

APHIS proposed updates to the scrapie regulations and program standards in September 2015 and accepted comments for 90 days. APHIS carefully reviewed the comments and made adjustments to the rule and program standards to address the concerns raised.

This rule is on display in today's Federal Register at <https://bit.ly/2uw1szM>. It takes effect 30 days following publication in the Federal Register, with one exception. States will need to meet scrapie surveillance minimums to maintain their consistent-state status in the eradication program. If a state does not meet the sampling requirements at the end of FY 2019, it must provide APHIS with a plan within one year for coming into compliance and be in compliance within two years of the effective date of the final rule.

Original article: <https://bit.ly/2UaYgYN>

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11 Fundamental Tips for Communicating Across Cultures

Source: The Grossman Group

1. Do your homework. Become aware of cross-cultural etiquette standards (including body language). Research to understand which gestures and phrases are deemed taboo to avoid offending others. And as you prepare for each communication, ask these three simple questions to ensure you're keeping cultural considerations top of mind:

- What specifically can I do to help increase my awareness of cross-cultural communications?
- How can I capitalize on my strengths when communicating across cultures?
- How can I work on rather than try to hide my weaknesses in cross-cultural communications?

2. Don't make cultural assumptions. Everyone has different expectations, cultures aside. Don't simply transfer an experience with one person within a culture to another. When in doubt about something, ask your colleague or client what they prefer.

3. Speak clearly and in a pace that is steady and not rushed. While someone may be fluent in your native language, it's important to remember that it may not be the person's first language. Speaking in a steady pace will help ensure understanding.

4. Separate questions to avoid unnecessary confusion. Don't double-up questions in a sentence. Speak in short sentences and stick to one topic at a time.

5. Avoid the use of slang. Slang or jargon does not often translate between languages.

6. Ask open-ended questions. This way, the other

person can freely share his or her thoughts in a way that feels natural.

7. Listen actively and check for understanding often. Repeat what you're hearing to ensure information is resonating. Don't assume your messages are being understood.

8. Expect that misunderstandings may occur. Be prepared to revisit topics as messages may get [lost in translation](#).

9. Understand that people of different cultures speak in different tones. The tone of someone's voice may not accurately reflect the intention of their communication.

10. Encourage communication and show support for people who struggle with your native language. People who are not at ease with your language may be shy during a conversation. Show support and demonstrate encouragement to build trust and foster dialogue.

11. Set expectations during meetings. As you would do for any meeting, ensure there's mutual understanding around timing and next steps.

Which of these steps – if implemented well – would have the greatest positive impact for you?

—David Grossman

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Master of Preventive Veterinary Medicine

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

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

Instruction commences in early August each year.

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

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



Ag Sec Switches Title to Get Food Safety Leader in Place

by Rita Jane Gabbett,
Meatingplace

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

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

On Monday, Perdue named Brashears as deputy under secretary for food safety, along with two other unconfirmed appointees -- Naomi Earp as deputy assistant secretary for civil rights, and Dr. Scott Hutchins as deputy under secretary for research, education, and economics, in a statement that pointedly said, "These positions

do not require Senate confirmation."

All three had been confirmed by the Senate Agriculture Committee to more senior roles, but their nominations expired without receiving confirmation votes by the end of the 115th Congress in early January. The President has resubmitted their nominations to the Senate in the 116th Congress. Brashears was re-nominated for under secretary for food safety; Earp for assistant secretary for civil rights and Hutchins for under secretary for research, education, and economics.

"At USDA, we've been engaged in fulfilling our mission without all of our players on the field, so we want to get these strong, qualified leaders in the game," Perdue said. "I want to thank these three for their patience, as their professional lives have been placed on hold for months during their nomination process. Now, they will get to work right away on behalf of the American people. Nevertheless, I

urge the Senate to act on their new nominations as quickly as possible, so we can have them in the positions for which they were intended in the first place."

While in their deputy roles as selected by Perdue, they will not be serving in "acting" capacities for the positions for which they have been nominated. As a result, they will not be able to exercise the functions or powers expressly delegated to the Senate-confirmed positions. As Deputy Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, Dr. Hutchins will oversee the Office of the Chief Scientist, with Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young continuing to serve as acting chief scientist.

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

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

(Continued on Pg. 8 "FSIS Switch")

(Continued from Pg. 8 “*FSIS Switch*”)

Her research program focuses on improving food safety standards to make an impact on public health. Her work evaluates interventions in pre- and post-harvest environments and on the emergence of antimicrobial drug resistance in animal feeding systems. These efforts resulted in a

commercialized pre-harvest feed additive that can reduce E. coli and Salmonella in cattle.

Brashears also leads international research teams to Mexico, Central and South America to improve food safety and security and to set up sustainable agriculture systems in impoverished areas.

She is past-chair of the National Alliance for Food Safety and Security and of the USDA multi-state research group.

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FSIS Responds to the Washington Post Article on New Swine Inspection System: USDA’s FSIS Condemns The Washington Post for False Reporting on a Critical Public Health Issue

WASHINGTON, April 8, 2019 – The Washington Post says that democracy dies in darkness. If that’s the case, then The Washington Post’s story about the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is a solar eclipse.

FSIS is made up of 9,000 civil servants with the noblest of missions – to protect the American food supply. The safety of every meat, poultry, and egg product in the United States is ensured by FSIS inspection personnel, each and every day.

It’s a responsibility and mission so important that every FSIS employee takes an Oath of Office. If only The Washington Post was held to the same standard. In February of 2018, following a 20 year evaluation in 5 market hog establishments, FSIS put forth a proposed rule to the American public – beginning a full and transparent notice and comment rule-making process. The proposed rule includes a voluntary, opt-in inspection system, called New Swine Slaughter Inspection System (NSIS), for market hog establishments, and separate mandatory testing requirements for all swine establishments. This proposal and the research supporting it spans two decades. The work of FSIS to modernize inspection spans the last four presidential administrations.

On April 3, 2019, The Washington Post published a story titled, “Pork industry soon will have more power over meat inspections,” deciding to reprint the talking points of special interest groups while claiming the agency declined interview requests. The Washington Post knows full well that as a federal regulatory agency, FSIS cannot litigate or conduct rulemaking through the media, yet The Post wants to try the agency in the court of public opinion.

FSIS is appalled at The Washington Post’s poor attempt at explaining a proposal to modernize inspection. The Post’s decision to continue to parrot arguments that are devoid of factual and scientific evidence only serves to further the personal agenda

of special interest groups that have nothing to do with ensuring food safety.

Despite FSIS spending countless hours responding to The Post and providing clarification about the proposed rule, The Post chose to ignore the information and went with an already formed opinion and headline.

Shame on you, Washington Post. This story earns you at least four Pinocchios.

“Pork industry soon will have more power over meat inspections”

FALSE: First, by law only federal inspectors do meat inspections. Also by law, only federal inspectors can apply the USDA mark of inspection, which consumers rely on to know their meat is safe. To imply otherwise is sloppy, inaccurate and reckless.

“The Trump administration plans to shift much of the power and responsibility for food safety inspections in hog plants to the pork industry as early as May...”

FALSE: Again, only federal inspectors do meat inspections.

Much has changed since the 1967 Wholesome Meat Act, including the old “poke and sniff” methods that were developed using an outdated understanding of risk and disease. With modernized hog slaughter, FSIS is moving inspection closer to an approach supported by current food safety science. In fact, FSIS conducted a 20-year pilot called the HACCP-Based Inspection Model Project (HIMP) in five market hog establishments. The pilot has been ongoing throughout four presidential administrations producing the safest food supply in the world. Modernizing inspection through science is clearly in the best interest of public health.

“The Trump administration plans to shift...”

FALSE: This is deliberately misleading. The plans and data gathering for this proposal started in the early 1990s under the Clinton administration. Since that

(Continued on Pg. 10 “*FSIS Responds to NSIS Article*”)

(Continued from Pg. 9, "FSIS Responds to NSIS Article")

time, dozens of food safety leaders regardless of administration or party have attempted to modernize inspection. This modernized approach to inspection was proposed and finalized for poultry under the Obama administration in 2014.

"...cutting the number of federal inspectors by about 40 percent and replacing them with plant employees"

FALSE: FSIS is not reducing the total number of federal inspectors by 40 percent and is not replacing our inspection personnel with plant employees that will conduct inspections. FSIS will make inspection staff determinations on a case-by-case basis to ensure that 100% inspection and other critical public health activities are carried out.

Should the proposed rule become final, federal inspectors won't be performing quality assurance tasks. Instead they would be able to focus on critically important activities.

"Under the proposed new inspection system, the responsibility for identifying diseased and contaminated pork would be shared with plant employees..."

FALSE: Under both the proposal and traditional inspection, establishment employees sort market hogs before FSIS inspection. They also may choose to not present some animals for FSIS inspection. This is consistent with current policy for establishments under traditional inspection. It's important to understand that under the proposal, establishment employees will not conduct inspections and they will not condemn animals.

"The new pork inspection system would accelerate the federal government's move toward delegating inspections to the livestock industry."

FALSE: This statement is false no matter how many times The Washington Post writes it. Again, only federal inspectors do meat inspections and under the proposed rule, FSIS inspectors would continue to conduct 100% ante-mortem inspection and 100% carcass-by-carcass inspection at post-mortem.

"Obama administration, poultry plant owners were given more power over safety inspections,

although that administration canceled plans to increase line speeds."

FALSE: No food safety inspections were handed to establishment employees. In that rule, maximum line speeds for establishments that adopt the New Poultry Inspection System (NPIS), were capped at 140 birds per minute. The original 20 establishments that participated in the pilot for decades were allowed to continue to slaughter poultry at 175 birds per minute. FSIS capped the other establishments at 140 birds per minute while stating very clearly that we would consider higher line speeds at establishments that are capable of consistently producing safe, wholesome, and unadulterated product and are meeting pathogen reduction and other performance standards.

"However, USDA officials confirmed they have no plans under the new system to test for salmonella — for which the USDA once tested. The agency will rely heavily on pathogen testing by plant owners, but those results will not have to be publicly disclosed."

"The hog plants also will no longer be required to test for E. coli, records show."

FALSE: The Washington Post deliberately misleads readers here because the facts did not fit their headline and opinion. As we explained in the proposed rule, FSIS discontinued its Salmonella verification sampling program for market hogs (carcasses) in 2011. Why? Because we were finding very low rates of Salmonella on whole carcasses. FSIS is removing the carcass Salmonella performance standards for market hogs in the proposed rule because 1) the standards have not been used since 2011, and 2) the standards were not being verified because of the low rates of Salmonella on whole carcasses.

What is true is that FSIS is currently testing pork cuts and other pork products (different from whole carcasses) for Salmonella and will decide in 2019 whether to develop new pathogen performance standards for these products or take other actions to address Salmonella in these products. This is in line with what we told the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in public documents.

(edited for length)

GAO Report: FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE USDA's Efforts to Prepare for a Potential Outbreak Could Be Strengthened

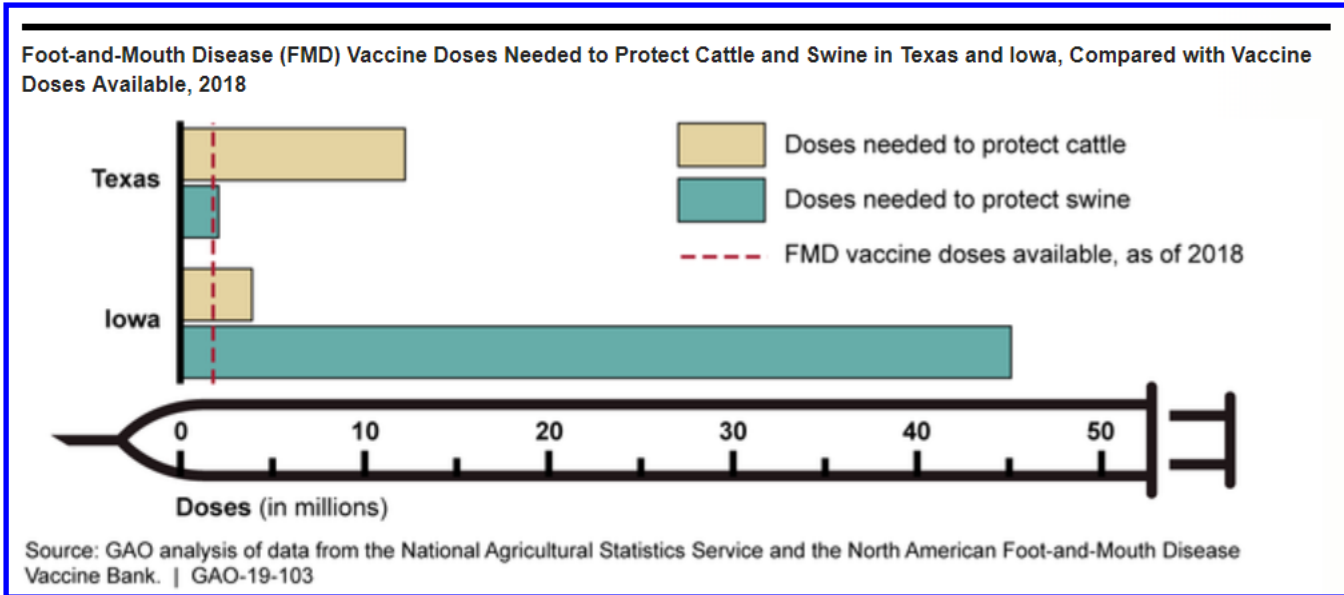
What GAO Found

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) planned approach for responding to an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) includes several strategies. These strategies generally rely on killing

infected and susceptible animals, vaccinating uninfected animals, or a combination of both approaches. USDA would implement one or more of the strategies, depending on factors such as the outbreak's size and the resources available,

according to agency documents. USDA would likely face significant challenges in pursuing its response goals of detecting, controlling, and containing FMD quickly; eradicating FMD while seeking to

Continued on Pg. 11, "GAO on FMD")



stabilize industry and the economy; and facilitating continuity of commerce in uninfected animals. GAO identified challenges in 11 areas—including allocating a limited supply of FMD vaccine—based on its review of USDA documents, responses to GAO's questionnaire, and interviews with agency officials and others with expertise on FMD. According to USDA, the agency may not have a sufficient supply of FMD vaccine to control more than a small outbreak because of limited resources to obtain vaccine. As shown below, the current vaccine supply would be sufficient to protect about 14 percent of Texas's cattle or about 4 percent of Iowa's swine; these states' cattle and swine populations are the nation's largest. The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 includes a provision to increase the FMD vaccine supply.

USDA has identified dozens of corrective actions to mitigate the challenges of responding to an FMD outbreak, as called for in USDA procedures, but has not prioritized these corrective actions or monitored their completion, as also called for in its procedures. USDA has identified the corrective actions through exercises simulating FMD outbreaks, surveys, and

lessons learned from other foreign animal disease outbreaks. However, USDA has not completed all of the corrective actions, including actions related to vaccination. Agency officials stated that they have not completed such corrective actions because they have been responding to outbreaks of other animal diseases and have limited resources. Without following agency procedures to prioritize and monitor corrective actions, USDA cannot ensure that it is allocating its resources to the most beneficial actions to prepare for a possible FMD outbreak.

Why GAO Did This Study

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease that causes painful lesions on the hooves and mouths of some livestock, making it difficult for them to stand or eat, thus greatly reducing meat and milk production. The United States has not had an FMD outbreak since 1929, but FMD is present in much of the world. An FMD outbreak in the United States could have serious economic impacts, in part because trade partners would likely halt all imports of U.S. livestock and livestock products until the disease was eradicated. These imports were valued at more than \$19 billion in 2017.

GAO was asked to review USDA's

efforts to prepare for an FMD outbreak. This report examines (1) USDA's planned approach for responding to an FMD outbreak; (2) challenges USDA would face in pursuing its response goals; and (3) how USDA identifies, prioritizes, and monitors corrective actions to mitigate the challenges. GAO observed a USDA FMD preparedness exercise; reviewed agency documents and nongeneralizable questionnaire responses from 29 respondents from federal and state government, livestock industries, and universities; and interviewed officials from federal and state governments and representatives of livestock industries and universities.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending that USDA follow its procedures to prioritize and monitor the completion of corrective actions that the agency has identified for FMD preparedness. USDA agreed with these recommendations, and described actions it will take to implement them. For more information, contact Steve D. Morris at (202) 512-3841 or morrisss@gao.gov.

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