

# Sheep & Goat HEALTH REPORT

A National Institute for Animal Agriculture Publication

Spring 2007

## USDA/APHIS Clarifies ID Requirements of NAIS, NSEP, SFCP

In December 2006 as part of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) outreach and education program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) issued a statement that officially clarified the role of NAIS and the identification requirements of the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) and the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP).

In addition, the APHIS/Veterinary Services National Coordinator for NSEP and SFCP, Dr. Diane Sutton, presented similar information at the American Sheep Industries Association annual meeting in San Antonio in late January.

The following is the complete statement issued by USDA in December:

- USDA acknowledges that there has been some confusion about the NAIS and how it interacts with

existing scrapie eradication programs such as the voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP) and the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP).

- The NAIS is voluntary at the Federal level. USDA firmly believes that it is a producer's choice to participate in any aspect of the program and that the NAIS works best when livestock owners/producers freely decide to take part.
- For this reason, at the Federal level, enrolling in the SFCP or requesting official tags as part of NSEP does not register your premises in the NAIS. Conversely, choosing to register your premises in the NAIS does not affect your flock identification number or your status in the SFCP. The three programs complement each other, but are distinct.
- The NAIS is voluntary. SFCP is voluntary. Complying with the identification requirements of the NSEP

is required by a regulation that has been in place since August 2001.

- Producers are not required by USDA to participate in the NAIS in order to either enroll in SFCP or to get the official eartags provided free to producers through the NSEP.
- Some of the NAIS approved eartags have also been approved for scrapie program use. This allows producers to participate in all three programs using the same eartag. As with other NAIS tags, premises registration with NAIS is required to purchase these tags.
- Continued grassroots input is critical to the success of the NAIS. Accordingly, USDA and its state and industry partners have established NAIS working groups to provide recommendations and input as we move forward with the system.
- Each species working group member  
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## Comprehensive Sheep ID 'How To' Available

Finally, all in one place is a handy source for everything a sheep producer needs to learn about identification. It comes in the form of a PowerPoint presentation and covers everything from requirements (both State and Federal) for the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) to record keeping to proper placement of tags. It also covers the relationship between NSEP ID requirements and those for voluntary participation in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) as they currently stand.

This very useful tool has been prepared by sheep producer, Dr. Cindy Wolf of the University of Minnesota, and her colleague Eileen Kuhlmann. "It's based on our practical experience plus a study we did as part of a Cooperative Agreement from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Veterinary Services (APHIS/VS) on radio frequency identification devices (RFID) and supporting technology," explains Dr. Wolf.

In addition to the PowerPoint presenta-



*Dr. Cindy Wolf*

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## Foot-and-Mouth Disease Focus of UC Davis Research Study

A nationwide research study aimed at protecting the livestock industry from the consequences of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) has been undertaken by the Center for Animal Disease Modeling and Surveillance (CADMS) in the University of California Davis, School of Medicine. The study, conducted in collaboration with the National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Diseases and supported by the USDA and Department of Homeland Security, seeks to expand a 2004 statewide FMD study that concentrated on just California.

In the new study, livestock producers from across the United States are being asked to participate in an online study regarding animal movement and husbandry practices. Information will then be used in a simulation model developed in the previous study to characterize the size, duration and economic impact of an FMD epidemic anywhere in the United States.

"Our model will provide decision-

makers with a valuable tool for rapid response and will help determine the best strategies, including vaccination to contain an outbreak and minimize impact to the livestock industry," states Dr. Tim Carpenter, School of Veterinary Medicine professor and director of the study.

The online survey of producers went live last October and will be ongoing. Data collected by June of this year will be analyzed with additional data analyzed periodically from that point forward.

"We're after information from producers of all cloven-hoofed animals," Dr. Carpenter adds. "The more producers who participate, the better the data—and the better the model predictions."

"At present, the data set is a bit weak for pigs and dairy, and that is ironic as these two groups could be the hardest hit should an FMD epidemic strike."

The producer survey is simple, educational and takes very little time to complete. Questions are answered with a click of the mouse. The questionnaire starts with such questions as "primary type of livestock raised," "state and county of primary livestock" and "number of animals" and proceeds to animal movement questions and such.

Information provided by producers is kept confidential and is used only for modeling purposes.

Individuals can participate in the survey at [www.cadms.ucdavis.edu](http://www.cadms.ucdavis.edu) and clicking on the "US Livestock Disease Survey" button located in the upper left hand corner of the CADMS home page. This click results in a page asking if the person is a livestock producer and

explains the importance of participating in the survey.

The next step is to click on the "Start US Livestock Disease Survey" button located in the upper lefthand corner or on "Start Survey" at the bottom of the page.

"The response from the livestock industry from California during the initial study was outstanding, and we are hoping to get the same response from the rest of the country," Dr. Carpenter states.

Ongoing survey results can also be viewed at the CADMS website. The steps to view the results include clicking on the "US Livestock Disease Survey" button located in the upper left hand corner of the CADMS home page, then clicking on the "View Ongoing Survey Results" button in the upper left hand corner of the next page.

Participation results are updated daily and can be viewed by several different variables by state, livestock operation type, operation subtype, aggregated herd size, receive animals from out of state and/or ship animals out of state.

"Because FMD spreads so quickly and is easily transmitted, the threat of FMD to the U.S. is very serious, and we need to be prepared," Dr. Carpenter summarizes. "This model will help us be better prepared."

### Participants by species as of Feb. 6, 2007

Dairy cattle	6.4%
Beef cattle	31.7%
Swine	2.1%
Sheep	45.7%
Goats	8.3%
Calf or heifer ranch	1.6%
Total	100% ●

## USDA/APHIS Clarifies (cont'd from page 1)

bership consists of representatives from various levels and segments of their industry.

- The sheep working group has recommended that sheep producers who decide to participate in the NAIS be allowed to use the identification devices numbering systems

currently used for SFCP and NSEP.

- The recommendation does not mean that producers participating in SFCP and NSEP will be registered in NAIS. Only that those who choose to register would have the option to continue to use SFCP and NSEP identification devices. ●



### Sheep & Goat Health Report

Spring 2007

*Sheep & Goat Health Report* provides the latest information on issues pertinent to sheep & goat health initiatives, strategies, research and regulatory action. It is a communications initiative of the NIAA Sheep & Goat Health Committee and is produced in cooperation with USDA-APHIS. Reprinting is encouraged.

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## USDA Launches Two Important Scrapie Studies

A study on the prevalence of scrapie in goats and another study to test a new live animal test procedure in sheep and goats are now being conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Veterinary Services in cooperation with State animal health authorities. The Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH) and the National Veterinary Services Laboratories are leading the efforts.

A Caprine Scrapie Prevalence Study, designed to determine whether the prevalence of scrapie in the adult slaughtered goat population is less than 0.1 percent, is currently under way.

"While there have been a number of goats tested as part of the Regulatory Scrapie Slaughter Surveillance (RSSS), they primarily represent the goat population in Texas, and, based on the origin of scrapie cases in sheep and goats, are unlikely to be positive," according to Katherine Marshall, DVM, MSc, who designed the study.

"To date, we have tested 685 goats

sampled at slaughter plants with 69 percent originating in Texas and another 20 percent originating in South Dakota, Oklahoma, and Colorado. None of the goats tested as part of RSSS have been reported to be scrapie infected. However, because the goal of the new study is to confidently determine whether the prevalence of scrapie in adult goats being slaughtered is less than 0.1 percent, we will target populations of goats which should have a higher likelihood of being exposed to scrapie. Up to 3000 samples will be collected from Food Safety Inspection Services (FSIS) inspected plants which have slaughtered adult goats during the previous year and which we believe come from geographic areas where they may have been exposed to scrapie," states Dr. Marshall.

The study is expected to continue for one year.

The third eyelid test for scrapie was the first live animal test which represented a significant breakthrough in diagnosing the disease. If performed properly the test is accurate and reliable, but

getting sufficient tissue to test can be challenging. As reported previously in *Sheep and Goat Health Report*, a rectal biopsy showed promise in both accuracy and ease of obtaining the sample.

According to Dr. Marshall, in November 2006 the procedure began to evaluate the recto-anal mucosa associated lymphoid tissue (RAMALT) for use in live animal testing of flocks for scrapie. Samples are being collected from scrapie exposed animals being depopulated as part of the scrapie eradication program. The evaluation will include a comparison with the test results on third eyelid biopsy and on multiple tissues following necropsy, repeatability between rectal biopsies samples from the same animal, and a determination of the number of follicles required per biopsy to give a valid test. Preliminary data analysis will begin after 100 positive animals have been sampled. Sampling may be extended to 200 positive animals to allow for a more precise definition of the sensitivity of the RAMALT immunohistochemistry (IHC) relative to other tissues tested. ●

## Vermont Faces 'Inconsistent' Status

Regulatory action to remove Vermont from the National Scrapie Eradication Program's (NSEP) list of "consistent states" is underway. This action is being taken because Vermont has not enacted change of ownership identification as required by federal regulation to remain consistent.

"This means that Vermont sheep producers and some goat producers will not be able to move breeding or show stock across state lines unless they are enrolled and in good standing with the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP)," according to Dr. Diane Sutton, NSEP National Coordinator for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Veterinary Services (APHIS/VS).

Enrolling new flocks in SFCP could result in significant delays due to work loads. SFCP sheep won't face these restrictions because their flocks are inspected annually by federal or state

officials.

Being "inconsistent" also means that Vermont producers who want to ship culled sheep out of state will not be able to without a certification of veterinary inspection. Vermont will be considered a consistent state once APHIS determines that it meets certain requirements regarding animal identification that are necessary for "consistent state" status. Vermont has initiated its state rule-making process to make their Scrapie Control Program consistent with APHIS standards and currently 45 flocks in Vermont do meet the existing requirements.

The state of Maine is expected to meet the ID requirement to remain a "consistent" state by mid March. The other 48 states have change of ownership ID requirements. Under these requirements most sheep and goats must be officially identified and records must be kept that meet NSEP standards. ●

**Available Free Online:  
A Young Persons  
Guide to Keeping  
Animals  
Safe,  
Healthy**

Prepared  
by the  
College of  
Veterinary

Medicine at Ohio State University, a short, youth-oriented booklet and course on basic medical principles essential to keeping animals safe and healthy is available, free on-line. It covers most species, including sheep and goats, and talks about on-farm isolation, traffic control, hygiene and sanitation. It can be found at <http://www.vet.ohio-state.edu/1985.htm>.



## Working Toward Solutions with JDIP

By Ken Olson, Ph.D.

Johne's is recognized by producers, veterinarians and researchers as a challenging and costly disease. While no huge breakthroughs can be reported, research is underway and showing progress in a number of areas according to scientists who met at the 3rd Annual Johne's Disease Integrated Program (JDIP) Conference in January at Texas A&M University.

It has long been known that *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies paratuberculosis (MAP) causes the disease, but much remains to be learned about the organism as well as its diagnosis, control and elimination.

The annual conference provides a forum for the unique consortium of Johne's experts who make up JDIP to share research results and discuss plans for the coming year. They recognize that the best opportunity to achieve their goal of providing producers with new or improved tools to combat Johne's disease is through sharing ideas and expertise, as well as coordination and integration of basic biological research with animal modeling and field studies.

While many of the JDIP projects focus on cattle, work also involves sheep and goats. In the area of Education and Outreach, separate online courses for producers, relative to Johne's disease in sheep and goats, have been made available through the University of Wisconsin College of Veterinary Medicine site

<http://vetmedce.vetmed.wisc.edu/jdvcp/>.

During the past year JDIP also took the lead in the development of international standard guidelines for Johne's disease challenge models based on animal species. Standards for both sheep and goats were included. This will facilitate future research projects.

Time and cost make it difficult to do experimental work with cattle. JDIP researchers have taken the lead in the evaluation and use of mathematical models for Johne's. They are also using other species including goats for preliminary studies. These models will allow future Johne's work to proceed more rapidly and in a more cost effective manner, but it also means that the results are first available for these species.

In the area of more basic research, Luiz Bermudez, Oregon State, and Adel Talaat, UW-Madison, reported on genetic mapping efforts to identify specific genes and/or conditions that allow MAP to survive and establish infections in animals. This is helping to identify new targets for vaccine development. As a result of this work, several new vaccines will be ready for testing in the coming year.

While new technology is being developed, other workers are finding ways to use existing technology more effectively. Michael Collins, UW-Madison, and Shigetoshi Eda,

University of Tennessee, reported on novel and more sensitive ELISA tests, while work of Natalia Cernicchiaro, University of Minnesota, demonstrated advances in speed and accuracy with automated liquid culture equipment. All have the potential to diagnose the disease more rapidly and accurately.

The international interest in Johne's was also evident at the conference. Dr. Douwe Bakker, EU, reported that during the past year, the European Union has initiated a project funded under their food safety program that is similar to JDIP. It seeks to develop improved tools for the detection of MAP in livestock and food while also addressing the risk of human exposure. The consortium includes 28 partners from 14 countries and has identified 16 "work packages." This EU program, as well as programs in Australia, Canada and Israel, will offer JDIP additional opportunities for future collaboration.

In closing the conference Dr. Vivek Kapur, leader of JDIP, said, "The science behind the work that has been reported at this meeting is outstanding, but the greatest benefit of JDIP is the networking and sharing of ideas that are occurring as a result of the project."

Visit <http://www.jdip.org/> to learn more about JDIP, its' projects and plans. ●

## Department of Homeland Security Funds Non-Virus Manufactured FMD Vaccines

To date, available foot-and-mouth disease vaccines have been cultured from foot-and-mouth viruses. This technology, however, may become outdated and unnecessary. On Feb. 1, 2007 the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) signed a three-year contract with GenVec, Inc. to support the development and manufacturing of adenovector-based foot-and-mouth disease vaccines that do not require use of

live FMD viruses which are prohibited on the U.S. mainland.

"Put simply, the current FMD vaccine is the virus itself. The new vaccine under development contains only specific protein pieces of the actual FMD virus which allows us to safely manufacture here," states Dr. Rick King, GenVec's senior vice president of research.

Dr. King adds that another benefit

of the new vaccines—and a key difference between standard FMD vaccines and the novel molecular-based GenVec vaccines—is that one can tell the difference between vaccinated animals and animals infected with foot-and-mouth disease.

"We're talking exciting, novel vaccines that have the potential to change the FMD vaccine landscape," Dr. King adds.

The Department of Homeland Security is providing GenVec with up to \$6 million the first year and has a total of \$15 million available over the next three years if the Department elects to exercise its annual renewal options. Under the agreement, GenVec will be in charge of the development, production and regulatory approval of the vaccine. The Department of Homeland Security will be responsible for conducting animal studies at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center.

GenVec, located in Gaithersburg, Md., is engaged in cutting-edge research and development of gene-based therapeutics and molecular-based vaccines for humans and animals. Other infectious disease vaccines

in development include an HIV vaccine in collaboration with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and a malaria vaccine in collaboration with the U.S. Navy and PATH's Malaria Vaccine Initiative.

"The FMD vaccines use front-line technology similar to the difficult disease vaccines we are developing for HIV and malaria," Dr. King elaborates. "The vaccines we are developing—including the FMD vaccines—utilize GenVec's proprietary adenovector technology. The FMD vaccines utilize a novel production cell line capable of producing antigens that would normally inhibit production."

Dr. King notes that the agreement between the Department of Homeland

Security and GenVec "is an important step forward in the development of U.S. production of a foot-and-mouth disease-marked vaccine to protect the U.S. food supply against a very virulent disease."

The goal of the Department of Homeland Security funding is to have vaccines safely manufactured in the United States that can protect animals from infection resulting from bioterrorism or accidental exposure to the disease. The importance of this goal is underscored by the USDA's Inter-Agency Working Group's January 2003 Final Report which states that a FMD outbreak in the United States could have more than a \$100 billion impact on the U.S. economy. ●

## Deadly to Sheep/Goats and Humans Scientists Study Rift Valley Fever to Keep It Out of U.S.

It's not here now. To the best of anyone's knowledge it never has been here and scientists are working hard to keep Rift Valley Fever (RVF), which is potentially deadly to humans and causes nearly 100 percent abortions in infected sheep and goats, in sub-Saharan Africa. Critical goals are reducing the prevalence of RVF in Africa, preventing RVF from leaving its endemic regions in Africa by watching pathways along which it could reach the U.S., and preparing a response plan should RVF be detected in the U.S. "Rift Valley fever virus is a mosquito-borne zoonotic hemorrhagic disease that causes significant morbidity in humans and nearly 100% abortions in sheep, cattle, and goats, and is often fatal to young animals. Though currently confined mainly to Africa this disease could be introduced into the U.S. and spread via mosquitoes at least as rapidly as West Nile Virus (WNV). Unlike WNV, Rift Valley fever is also transmitted by contact with infected tissues or aerosolized material, and there is no approved vaccine for humans or animals," according to Dr. Seth C. Britch, of the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS), Center for Medical, Agricultural and Veterinary

Entomology, Gainesville, Fla.

Speaking at the American Sheep Industries Association annual meeting in January, Dr. Britch cautioned, "This is not a time for panic. Our best protection is awareness, vigilance and a two pronged strategy of prevention and preparation."

Dr. Britch is working in a team organized to develop and implement strategy to prevent RVF from entering the United States and to possibly control it if that should happen. The team includes scientists from USDA-ARS, USDA-APHIS, CDC, NASA, Department of Defense, the University of Wyoming, and George Mason University.

His role on the team is to work with satellite climate data processed by NASA and mosquito distribution data from vector control agencies across the U.S. He uses historical relationships between changes in climate and changes in mosquito populations to find rainfall or temperature patterns that bring about elevated populations of mosquitoes. The team is also looking at satellite images of vegetation as indicators of mosquito and RVF favorable conditions.



"Our objective is to build a model that will identify when and where environmental conditions are favorable for unusually dense emergences of mosquitoes and thereby target vector control as well as dispersal of vaccines and diagnostics should the virus ever spread to the U.S.," he said. "Hopefully RVF will never get here but we must be prepared to fight it if it does."

Learn to recognize the signs of RVF and the effect of climate on RVF transmission in Africa; more information can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/spb/mnpages/dispages/rvf.htm>, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs207/en/>, and at <http://www.geis.fhp.osd.mil/GEIS/SurveillanceActivities/RVFWeb/indexRVF.asp> ●

## Canadian Bluetongue, Anaplasmosis Policies Changed for U.S. Livestock

Canada has adjusted its bluetongue and anaplasmosis requirements for U.S. cattle, sheep, goats and other ruminants. On Feb. 2, the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, announced three changes in import regulations that allow live trade to flow a bit easier to northern neighbor Canada:

- 1) Effective immediately, all classes of U.S. cattle can enter Canada year round without any bluetongue-related import requirements.
- 2) Bluetongue restrictions have been lifted for sheep, goats and other ruminants imported to Canada for breeding purposes.
- 3) Testing requirements for cattle for anaplasmosis have been reduced.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has reviewed and revised its bluetongue import controls for animals from the United States several times prior as more was learned about the disease and the relevant risk factors present in Canada. This is the first across-the-board removal of bluetongue testing for decades.

"This is the first time since January 2004 that the door has been open at all

for sheep and goat breeding animals," states Dr. Debbie Barr, Canada's national manager of imports and exports, animal health division. "In the past, sheep and goats were allowed to cross the border for slaughter and for feeding for slaughter but breeding animals were banned until now."

Canada's new regulations center on a science-based permit system for most ruminant animals imported from the United States. Terry Stokes, chief executive officer of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, states that the CFIA's new permit-based system will eliminate unnecessary costs and procedures that impact the bottom line of U.S. producers of breeding stock.

The CFIA notes that its bluetongue surveillance program will be enhanced as a precaution. The CFIA will move from triennial to annual monitoring coupled with ongoing research and risk assessments.

National livestock organizations and APHIS deserve credit for helping U.S. livestock producers gain greater access to Canadian markets.

In FY 2002, APHIS' Center for

Epidemiology and Animal Health conducted a bluetongue surveillance pilot project in collaboration with three states and USDA's Agricultural Research Service. During a two-year study, up to 65 cattle in each of 120 herds in North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska were bled twice to detect antibodies to bluetongue viruses. During the summer of 2002, traps were set on 27 farms in North Dakota and South Dakota to collect *Culicoides*, the biting gnat which transmits the viruses. The farmers were selected based on prior vector trapping experiences in the three states.

Very few animals in North Dakota were positive for bluetongue virus antibodies. The distribution of *Culicoides sonorensis*, the primary U.S. vector of bluetongue viruses, was limited to Nebraska and the southwest parts of South Dakota and North Dakota, similar to the distribution found in 2001.

APHIS also supported related bluetongue studies in a joint Montana-Alberta (Canada)-USDA project testing for the prevalence of bluetongue virus antibodies to evaluate the prevalence of virus exposure in selected states. ●

## NAIS a Valuable Tool During Blizzard Recovery

Knowing the locations of livestock operations proved extremely valuable during back-to-back holiday storms that stranded thousands of animals on open ranges in Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Nebraska as well as the Oklahoma and Texas Panhandles. The information provided through Colorado's Premises Registration System, the foundation component of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), enabled animal health officials to work with producers to maintain the health of their animals.

Blizzard I began Dec. 20 and was the fourth largest storm in Colorado recorded history. The blizzard engulfed the central High Plains and adjacent Rockies, dumping up to 32 inches in places. Blizzard II struck a week later and dropped a swath of heavy snow from New Mexico through Colorado and on

to North Dakota. Severe wind and snow conditions resulted in 10-foot drifts.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture's State Veterinarian's Office realized the severity of these consecutive storms and concluded that starvation and dehydration were real possibilities and required addressing. That's when the office turned to a state held list of premises that had been registered in a voluntary program.

"When a voluntary premises registration program was initiated, some people viewed it as part of a disease trace-back system, but I saw this as a tool to help farmers and ranchers trapped in an animal health crisis," states Colorado State Veterinarian John Maulsby. "The storms became an animal health issue when animals did not have access to feed and help might be needed to keep animals alive."

Dr. Maulsby says the state veterinarian's office focused its efforts on a particularly hard-hit six-county area.

This area had about 350 voluntarily registered premises: beef, dairy, sheep and horses.

"About four hours of phone calls were placed directly to ranchers in south-east Colorado to evaluate the safety of those ranchers' families and the well being of Colorado livestock during the recent blizzard recovery operation. Our access to this list of premises made this process possible," Dr. Maulsby says. "Information on file gave us access to phone numbers, names and livestock



information, and this information was used with strict confidentiality."

Dr. Maulsby explains that the phone calls helped to determine if the animals had access to feed. If help was wanted, help was given.

"Having the information about the livestock owners that were in dire need of assistance gave us the opportunity to quickly assess the situation," states Colorado Division of Emergency Management Director George Epp. "Protecting the health of Colorado livestock is a top priority to this operation, and the list of registered premises was a big help." ●

## Comprehensive

(cont'd from page 1)

tion, much of the same information is also available in a small, pocket-sized printed booklet that also provides a handy table for keeping the ID records required by NSEP. The pocket book limits itself to the requirements of the NSEP and does not cover anything relating to NAIS.

Both versions have the following information: Tips for Tagging, Sheep Required to be Tagged by NSEP, NSEP Approved Tag Manufacturers, How to Use These Records, Records for Scrapie ID, Records for Replacement ID, Lists of State Veterinarians and USDA/APHIS/VS Area Veterinarians-in-Charge (AVIC), Suggested Tag Placement and Websites of Interest.

"The presentation is something that everyone in the sheep industry should see and the pocket book will be helpful to many producers," says Dr. Diane Sutton, the National Coordinator of NSEP. "Veterinarians, youth leaders, extension agents, dealers, auction and market operators and, yes, APHIS personnel—anyone who is directly involved in the sheep industry can benefit from this easy to understand summary. Dr. Wolf and Ms. Kuhlmann have done a real service to the sheep industry."

The PowerPoint presentation and the NSEP pocket book are available for viewing, downloading and ordering from any of the following websites: <http://www.animalagriculture.org/scrapie>, <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/naahps/scrapie/>, <http://sheepusa.org/>, <http://www.aasrp.org> and <http://www.sheepandgoatid.org>. ●

## News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs

### NIAA Selects Vise-Brown as New CEO; Reorganizes and Makes Other Staff Changes

**Michele Vise-Brown** was appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the association by the NIAA Board of Directors effective January 1, 2007.

In making the announcement, **Michele Vise-Brown** NIAA Board Chair Scott Stuart said, "We believe we've selected the ideal person to head NIAA. Michele Vise-Brown has been with NIAA since 2003 serving as Director of Member Relations and Committee Operations; she has done an outstanding job for us. Of particular note is the leadership she has provided this year in the absence of a full-time CEO. Nowhere was that more evident than with ID/INFO EXPO 2006 in Kansas City last August. She and the staff made the 2006 event the most successful in history."

Stuart went on to say that he and the rest of the Board of Directors believe that because Vise-Brown knows NIAA so well, her selection as CEO assures a virtually seamless transition and eliminates any need to relocate the office.

Vise-Brown replaced Dr. Nevil Speer who had been the acting CEO since June. "The association owes Dr. Speer a huge debt of gratitude for his leadership for the past six months," said Stuart. "I'm sure it has been a burden to him as he has many responsibilities at the Department of Animal Science at Western Kentucky University."

"He's been a joy and inspiration for me and the rest of the staff to work with," added Vise-Brown. "We've all learned a lot and grown under his direction and I know I'll be relying on him for help as I start this new challenge."

#### *In other staff changes*

**Pamela Meador**, formerly NIAA's part-time accountant, has joined the staff full time and is responsible for accounting and operational functions.

"Her understanding of NIAA, finan-



*Michele Vise-Brown*

cial support, agriculture knowledge and exceptional customer service is much welcomed to NIAA staff and members" said Vise-Brown.

**Gale Johnson** is serving as NIAA's Director of Communications on a contract basis. "Gale has worked with NIAA on numerous projects over the years including the Eradicate Scrapie! outreach program, last year's ID/INFO EXPO and a number of other projects. He is a huge asset because of his familiarity with NIAA and his very extensive background in all phases of agricultural communications," stated Vise-Brown.

Two Western Kentucky University students, senior **Cora Newsom** and junior **Jenna Brown** are working as staff assistants. Newsom, who joined NIAA last summer, is majoring in Economics with minors in Agriculture, Finance, and Business Administration. Brown joined the staff at the beginning of this year and is studying Agriculture Business with an emphasis in Agriculture Communications. Both women have extensive personal animal agriculture backgrounds raising and showing livestock, 4-H, and activities at the University.

**Kelly Gill** is a graphic designer under contract. She is a past employee of The Liberty Group, NIAA's printing house. She is on call to design promotional material or complete layout for NIAA publications.

**Julie Jones** is now a Registered Nurse and is working full time at the Vanderbilt University Burn Unit, but she is still involved with NIAA. She is maintaining the NIAA, Scrapie and Johnes websites and helps train her replacements on her day off.

**Nevil Speer**, even though he has taken on more duties at Western Kentucky University, has agreed to help NIAA as needed.

**Ken Olson** will continue to work on the Johnes Education Initiative. Launched in the summer of 2005, the program is a collaborative effort between industry and government to educate producers, veterinarians and others involved in beef and dairy production about Johnes disease.

**Peggy Logsdon** resigned from NIAA effective December 31, 2006. ●

## APHIS Stakeholders Announcement: USDA Endorses Industry-Recommended International Standards for Animal ID Technologies

The U.S. Department of Agriculture strongly believes that the best approach to establishing the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) is as a voluntary system driven by the states and the private sector. Accordingly, USDA has adopted a technology-neutral position regarding animal identification methods and processes and purposefully not designated any specific identification technologies for use with NAIS, recognizing that the market must ultimately determine which methods should be used.

Although not selecting or requiring the use of specific technology, USDA recognizes the importance of having a basic level of standardization to ensure, among other things, compatibility across vendors in the

national program, that technologies are adaptable or compatible with devices produced by different manufacturers, and that other countries recognize the identification technologies and/or devices used with NAIS. USDA has reviewed the recommendations of the NAIS Subcommittee that resulted from consensus of species working groups, and endorses the use of technology standards published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

USDA's decision is supported by the species working groups, several of which (bison, cattle and equine) have recommended that ISO compliant radio frequency identification (RFID) technology be used with NAIS. Specifically, USDA endorses the use of ISO 11784 and 11785, which would establish an RFID technology standard for producers or service providers who elect to use radio frequency technology in the NAIS.

While USDA is in favor of standardization and believes basic technology standards should be met, USDA remains technology-neutral and has not exclusively designated RFID or any other specific identification technology for use with NAIS. Rather, when RFID technology is used, the incorporation of ISO 11784 and 11785 by USDA in authorizing the use of the Animal Identification Number (AIN) will be followed to ensure the compatibility across vendors.

"These standards are imperative so industry partners in NAIS can be assured one reader can scan and successfully read all AIN tags that have RFID technology," states Bruce Knight, undersecretary for USDA's marketing and regulatory programs mission area. "But USDA is not requiring the use of RFID tags or

injectable implants; that remains a choice of the animal owner."

USDA will continue to consider emerging and developing technologies to ensure NAIS devices remain current with the marketplace. To encourage flexibility, USDA supports the establishment of standards for other technologies through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI); such standards could then, in turn, facilitate the development of standards for technologies at the international level.

ANSI coordinates the development and use of voluntary consensus standards in the United States and represents the needs and views of U.S. stakeholders in standardization forums around the globe. The Institute oversees the creation, promulgation and use of thousands of norms and guidelines that directly impact businesses in nearly every sector. ANSI is also actively engaged in accrediting programs that assess conformance to standards.

Additionally, pilot or field trials will be considered for the demonstration of such technologies to ensure the NAIS can advance with such technologies. At present, APHIS is supporting field trials or pilot projects involving three additional radio frequencies and three biometric markers for use with the NAIS. Companies will have the opportunity to collect data in field conditions under the supervision of state and federal animal health officials, which is a necessary first step in attempting to support the development of standards through the ANSI and, ultimately, the ISO.

For more information on the NAIS, please visit <http://www.usda.gov/nais>. ●

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