

Emerging Diseases: Discussion with the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Animal Health

In July 2014, Veterinary Services (VS) posted "Veterinary Services Proposed Framework for Response to Emerging Animal Diseases in the United States." This framework outlines those processes that VS will use to identify and evaluate emerging disease events and define the appropriate responses. Response activities fall into four categories:

1. Undertake global awareness, assessment, and preparedness for animal diseases or pathogens not currently in the United States that may be of animal or public health concern or have trade implications;
2. Detect, identify, and characterize disease events;
3. Communicate findings and inform stakeholders; and
4. Respond quickly to minimize the impact of disease events.

Emerging disease: A disease, infection, or infestation in domestic or wild animals that is a threat to terrestrial animals, aquatic animals, or humans, and meets one of the following criteria:

1. An unknown agent that is causing disease, infection, or infestation in a herd/flock/premise and has the potential to result in a significant animal or public health impact, and applied diagnostic tests have yielded negative or non-definitive results; OR
2. A newly identified agent that is causing disease, infection, or infestation in a herd/flock/premise and has the potential to cause significant animal or public health impact, or is occurring in multiple herds/flocks/premises; OR
3. A previously identified or known pathogenic agent that has a change in epidemiology, such as:
 - a. Increased pathogenicity,
 - b. Expanded host range,
 - c. Change in geography of an agent with the potential to cause a significant animal or public health impact, or
 - d. Unexpected morbidity/mortality

In a draft preparedness and response plan that you will receive, we describe the processes we will use when investigating and responding to an emerging disease. We would like to discuss this draft plan and get feedback on these activities.