

WITS-USDA-OFFICE OF COMMUNICAT

**Moderator: Rosalynn Floyd
September 7, 2016
7:31 AM**

Coordinator: Thank you all for standing by. Today's call is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time. All parties will be on a listen-only mode for the duration of the call today. If you need assistance at any time you can press Star zero on your phone. Speakers you may begin at any time.

Diane Sutton: Good morning. I'm Dianne Sutton, and I would like to welcome everyone to today's Secretary Advisory Committee on Animal Health meeting. The agency appreciates the time and diligent work of the committee members in preparing for this meeting after the forthcoming deliberations. I and the committee wish to thank my USDA colleagues for all their efforts in preparing for this meeting.

Now, let me say a word about my role as the designated federal official. As the DFO for this meeting I will serve as a liaison between the committee and the agency. I am also responsible for ensuring all provisions of the Federal Agency Advisory Committee Acts - FACA - mastering the operations of FACA.

Also in my role as DFO for the committee, a critical responsibility is work with the appropriate agency official to ensure that all appropriate ethics and regulations are satisfied. In that capacity, committee members are briefed on the provisions of the federal conflict of interest laws. In addition, each FACA participant has filed a standard government financial disclosure report regarding the meeting operations.

The committee has interesting and challenge issues for the day. We have a full agenda. And as you will note, the agenda times are approximate. So, be advised that we may not be able to keep to the exact times as noted. We will attempt to take a break midway in the morning and again midway in the afternoon.

A special note for all presenters, committee members, consultants, and public commenters, please turn off your microphone each time you speak. Likewise, please turn it on when you do wish to speak. So, this meeting is being recorded and broadcast.

Please be sure to turn off your microphone after you're finished. Copies of all the meeting materials and public comments are or will be available on the FACA website. You will notice that the following USDA - that following the USDA presentations, the committee may ask questions for clarification to USDA as needed.

According to FACA, we will maintain a public comment period offering the public the opportunity to provide comments about the topics being considered before the committee today at approximately 1:15 pm. According to FACA, we will maintain a public comment period, offering the public the opportunity to provide comments about the topics being considered. For members of the public requesting time to make a public comment, we will determine the

amount of time available once we know how many people wish to speak. Currently we don't have anyone registered.

I would like to add that during the committee discussion, if committee members require a greater clarification on an issue requiring participation from the public, they may request such information during the meeting through the chair or myself. In addition, public commenters if available during the committees' discussion may be asked to provide clarification of their comments (unintelligible) the committee in their review.

Now, I need to mention the FACA meeting minutes. As per FACA, meeting for this minute will be prepared. The minutes will be - include the description of the matters discussed and the conclusions reached by the committee. As DFO, I prepare the meetings and ensure they are certified by meeting chair within 90 calendar days of this meeting. The minutes of today's meeting will be available on the FACA website.

In addition to the meeting - sorry. In addition to the minutes, there is a FACA meeting final report. The committee will prepare this report as a response to questions posed by the agency. This report will include their review and analysis of material presented and the advice and recommendations of FACA.

USDA will announce the availability of the report and provide access to the report on the FACA website. Again, I wish to thank the committee for your participation in today's meeting. I'm looking forward to your discussion today.

And with that, the chairman and I convene this meeting as the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Animal Health. So, I'll now go around the room, and

if you would please introduce yourself and indicate who you're representing.
So, if you could start with Liz our Chairman.

Liz Wagstrom: Hi, I'm Liz Wagstrom with the National Park Producers Council representing pork producers and swine veterinarians.

Judith McGeary: I'm Judith McGeary with the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance representing small scale and sustainable producers.

Peder Cuneo: Peder Cuneo, Extension Veterinarian with University of Arizona, Scientific Advisor.

Dr. John Fischer: John Fischer with the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study at University of Georgia representing the Association of Fish and Wildlife agencies and the American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians.

Stephen Crawford: Hi, Steve Crawford, New Hampshire State Veterinarian representing the Eastern States State Veterinarians.

Annette Jones: Annette Jones California State Veterinarian representing the Western State Veterinarians.

Wayne Freese: Wayne Freese anchor business person in Worthington, Minnesota, in a veterinary practice. And I represent the pork producers and swine veterinarians.

Don Ritter: Hi, I am Don Ritter. I'm a veterinarian with Mountaire Farms, a boiler producer. I'm here to represent the National Chicken Council and poultry producers.

David Smith: David Smith, Mississippi State University. And I'm a special government employee.

(Maryann Canable): (Maryann Canable) from - I'm a rancher from Kansas representing cattle producers.

Daniel Grooms: Good morning, Dan Grooms from Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine representing veterinarians.

(Mac Fernand): Hello. (Mac Fernand) a rancher from Washington State representing the (Jackie Mount) Farm Bureau and all the ranchers there.

Belinda Thompson: Belinda Thompson, College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University representing veterinarians and professional veterinary organizations.

John Mahoney: Good morning. John Mahoney, Director of veterinary services for Purina Animal Nutrition representing the veterinary profession.

Willie Reed: Good morning, Willie Reed. I'm from Perdue University, College of Veterinary Medicine. I'm representing the American Association of Veterinarian Laboratory Diagnosticians and the American Association of Avian Pathologists.

Randy McMillan: Randy McMillan from Clear Springs Foods in Idaho. I am representing Domestic Aquaculture.

Glenda Davis: Glenda Davis, from the Navajo Nation. I represent the tribal nations.

Michael Blackwell: Michael Blackwell. I'm the Chief Veterinarian for the Humane Society of the United States representing animal welfare organizations.

David Fernandez: David Fernandez. I'm at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, and I represent the small ruminant producers.

Dr. Jack Shere: My name is Jack Shere. I'm the new Chief Veterinary Officer of the United States. I replaced Dr. Clifford, which I'll talk about in a few minutes. And I'm the VS - Veterinary Services Deputy.

Diane Sutton: Do we have any committee members on the phone? Okay. Then we'll move onto the next topic on our agenda, which is opening remarks and vision for the committee moving forward. Our Deputy Administrator Dr. Jack Shere.

Dr. Jack Shere: Thanks Diane. I'll try to - I'm going to list the talking points which I'm not going to use. I'm not a talking points guys. So, I'm going to go off script which really makes my staff angry but that's the way I do things.

First of all, I want to welcome all of you for coming. I'm really - we really appreciate your engagement and your advice and your leadership and we're glad you came. It's unfortunate I think that you have to travel clear to Washington. But I'll talk about that in a few minutes and the reasons behind it and why we limit this to this area.

There's been a transition in VS and Dr. Clifford has decided - he decided back in - well, it was really the middle of last year that he wanted to step into a different type of mode and he wanted to do something different. And so he approached our administrator and talked to our administrator about the possibilities of him being a national trade advisor.

And we created that position. We had a senior level - senior leader position and we put Dr. Clifford into that. And he's done tremendous things in the area

trade. And that's his passion. And so the transition into that was a good one for us.

Since he's been in that position, I took over and was selected by our administrator. Took over back in February. So, it has only been about six months or so that I've been doing this job. But I want to talk about some of the things that are going on in our organization so that you have an awareness of why you might see some of the things you might see coming out of our office.

First of all, it's not just a transition of our leadership at the top level. There's been a transition and an ongoing transition throughout veterinary services and all of government. You're going to start to see a huge turnover in personnel.

They've been talking for probably the last 10 years about the fact that all of these federal leadership positions could retire. The problems were that most veterinarians stay two to three years longer than they need to past their retirement.

So, a lot of folks hang around. And the economy in the past has been bad, so, therefore people hung around even longer, but now they're retiring. And in our organization alone in APHIS - I'm going to speak about APHIS, and I'll tell you about VS, veterinary services.

Forty-five percent of our top level leadership can retire now. They can just get up and leave tomorrow. So, that's a huge thing to think about; how are we going to replace those leaders? Are we prepared? Have we done a good job of getting our leadership ready for the next wave?

Within VS 55 percent of our entire workforce can retire now. That's not just our leaders that's everybody that can walk out the door. So, we're an aging workforce. Not old, but experienced. So, that being the issue, the question is as those experienced folks walk out the door. One - are there leaders ready to step up and take their place? Two - do they have experience and knowledge to do that job? Three - are they interested? Now, that's - the third one is really a quandary for us because not everybody wants to be a leader, not everybody wants to supervise people, and not everybody is cut out for it. And we know that.

So, in this process we've begun within VS a succession planning strategy. We had one, but as they say, you can't do succession planning on a big sale - with a big sale attitude. And really, now's the time that we really have to take this seriously, have to do something. So, we started some new programs.

One of the things we've done is we have a Saul T. Wilson Scholarship Program. That scholarship program normally - we started that I believe in 2008 and we've been percolating - no, it was earlier than that. But we've been percolating along from the inception of that program with one or two scholarship applicants we've put on board and we bring them through the process. And the retention for that program's probably about 60%.

So, after they work for us, and we put them through school, we pay for part of their scholarship. I'll talk about that in a minute too. We used to pay for it all. But with the cost of college education and what kids are paying for school now we don't come close to that with our scholarship program.

So, they come on board. They work for us. And they go to school the four years. And then they owe us four years. After that four years, if I can keep them another four years, I'll keep them for life. Generally federal employees

when they come to us, if we can get them past six years of service they generally stay. If I can get them past ten I got them pretty much for the rest of their career. And that's a good thing. And it says a lot for a federal service.

So, we've started the succession program with that program. Last year instead of hiring and bring on one or two we've brought on I believe it was 12. This year we brought on 13. And they're undergrads all the way up to graduate level.

And we were paying \$10,000.00 for that scholarship. If you pull the colleges and veterinary schools across the nation, the tuition ranges anywhere from 20 grand a year all the way up to 60 grand a year. So, in some of the more expensive colleges and especially if you're an out-of-state student we don't touch that. We don't reach that.

FSIS, our sister agency, had requested that they could look at our program because as you know they've had up to 100 positions a year that they can't even fill in the field. They can get veterinarians to take the jobs. So, they're veterinarians are traveling in a circuit going to different institutions, slaughter institutions to oversee that slaughter planning.

So, they ask us if they could see our program, so they can begin their succession planning. They're facing the same things we are. Plus, they have the added burden of not being able to fill positions that they have. So, we lent them our write-up. If you read it, it's almost word-for-word the same. They copied it. But they took a little twist in what they did and they raised their scholarship level to \$15,000.00.

So, that puts a little pressure on veterinary services because we want the best and the brightest. When we hire we want first choice. Now our job in and of

itself kind of elicits that. FSIS is a tough job. A lot of folks don't like that kind of a job. A lot of veterinarians don't want to -they feel like that's not a challenge to their veterinary expertise to work in federal food safety inspection service.

There are different jobs of course, but their scholarship program will start off - everyone that graduates out of their program will go into the field for four years. That's a requirement.

And that's a requirement so that they can fill those empty slots. It's a good idea. It's good planning, and that they can cover the work that they need to in the field. Our program doesn't do that. But that \$15,000.00 looms in everyone's mind as well what should VS do? Should we stay at 10.

So the VS management team met. We discussed this at length. And even though we believe that even at \$10,000.00 we could get good students because we have a lot of applicants for these positions. We've raised it to 15; not just for the competition, but also it's the right thing to do for these students because of the cost that they're incurring. We need to be - if we're going to ask them for that length of service -we used to - at \$10,000.00 we used to cover their full tuition at that level. That's not happening anymore.

So, we've added that. We've changed that. That's part of our succession planning. We have other scholarship programs too to bring other folks on board. And we're implementing those at a higher level also.

Our recruitment is - what you're going to see with recruitment especially those of you at the veterinary schools, you're going to see an increased level of engagement. I've challenged all of our folks to get out there, get in the vet schools, talk to the students. Not just show up one day on a recruitment day

when (Dr. Detwiler) comes through, but continue that engagement at a further level so that those kids know us early in their careers, early in their career decision making and they know what we're about.

I remember when I was in vet school. - it was long ago of course - but we saw a lot of the federal - the food safety inspection service folks but not much of APHIS. Now, I know across the nations some of our folks are very heavily engaged with the vet schools and others not so. So, we want to increase that. And we're going to make an effort to make that - appearances and to increase our recruitment at that level.

The other thing we've done and you'll hear about is we started what's called the Veterinary Medical Officer Careers Program. And this is the first class that we'll be going through that. We'll have 27 veterinarians that are in that class. We hired 17 from outside of veterinary services and we put ten of our new hires into that program.

And that program mirrors or mimics the PVPC program that was a recruitment program that was started... Actually I came in through that program. It was started back in about 1988 was the first class I think that came through that. And as we looked at that program and looked at where are those people that came to that PVPC program - where are they now? Well, a lot of them of course with time they've moved into leadership positions. And it was a fairly successful program. So, we've created that program, recreated that program with some improvements.

And this VMOCP class we'll be going through that. They'll learn about APHIS. They'll learn about veterinary services. They'll learn about our programs. They'll get opportunities that our normal CO staff and folks at the labs and folks at SIA won't get because they'll get to see the entire gamut of

what we're about. We've done that as part of our succession planning because we feel like we need those immediate leaders. The students will become leaders eventually, but we need immediate leaders to come through this program and that's what we think that this program will allow us to do.

But again we may be three to four years behind even with that program. So, that's part of our succession planning. We're also in the process of evaluating all of our current leaders and those that want to move up and - throughout our program just to see what kinds of - strategically what we have for leaders and what's our readiness level. I mean who's going to step into the new roles. So, that's being done through our planning and strategy group.

And right now we're looking at our 15's. We're eventually look at our 14's, our 13's and we'll work our way down through the entire staff to find out one - are you interested in leadership? Two - what are your skills levels that you currently have? Where are you set? And three - what can we do as a program to help them advance in their careers with us. So, that's all ongoing.

So, let me switch gears a little bit now and talk about this committee, and what I've seen, and what we've done, and what you may have seen and may have questioned. When I first took over as the deputy this is one of the committees that I was really interested in because I think this committee can do a lot for veterinary service, can do a lot for animal health, and can do a lot for the leadership.

But I'm going to be honest with you. I plan to leverage this committee a lot because what comes out of this committee will help me to move my initiatives forward. So, I wanted to make sure that we were engaged. And my idea of engagement, it's a little different than other folks.

So, one of the things that I asked our management team to look at is what's your level of engagement? Now, there was a disagreement among different folks about what that should be, that we should leave this committee alone stay out of your business. I disagree with that. I think in order to get the most use and for you to understand your level of importance to us we need to engage at a high level to make sure you know what our issues are. And you can work at them from that standpoint.

I ask for a change in the charter and we've made some changes there. That's why the designated federal officers are now at your meetings. I didn't feel like there was proper assistance at that level. So, we've added them. I think they can guide the discussions.

I also talked to members of the committee and some of them felt that folks came in here at a disadvantage because they didn't even know what it was VS and APHIS did for sure. So, I asked that we implement at least the minimal training and discussion about what it is that we are and what we do. That's not in the charter, but it's an expectation that each time a new committee forms, new people join, that they get that education. And it's not that we - we just want you to start on the same ground level so that everybody works together.

And I've sat in meetings before where they're talking in acronyms and you don't understand what's being said or where they're going. Ask the questions and get the answers. That's really important that you guys are all on the same page as the folks that are speaking. So, if our folks - if our speakers today use stuff that you don't understand stop them and ask them. Make them explain it because sometimes they'll use acronyms I don't even know what they are.

So, the charter change went into place. And the education was asked for. The engagement of the designated federal officer and assistant in case that

designated federal officer - and that's Dianne here and (Patty) Fox. So, that's important to me. It's important that you have that assistance throughout your meetings.

The other things that's important to me is that my management team is engaged with you guys. And you're going to see at least I think three if not four of them today. Others will stop in, and I've given them the charge to be part of this - to listen in, to be here - in case questions come up.

Our subject matter experts are at your disposal. You've got questions, you've got topics you want to cover and we can provide those subject matter experts, we're certainly going to bring them in. We want you to have those folks.

So, moving from that to what I expect from you, it's very simple. And I've said this. If you've been in my office you've heard this already. I expect a partnership. I expect us to work together, to understand, to iron out our differences in the room if there are differences, to move forward with a like agenda, to work together, and to make progress, not just to meet.

And I read over your recommendations and I'll be honest with you, I'll lay this on the table too. The agency should - read your recommendations. The agency should completely drop that. I agree. The agency should do a lot of things. That's not a partnership. A partnership is how do we work together? Okay. That's what I want to see.

The agency should, puts a lot of work on me. And I don't mind work, but I want a partnership. What can we do together, and how can we get there? Not the agency should. Okay. So, that's not a criticism. It's just as I read through those documents that's kind of what hit me. Okay.

There's a lot of experience at this table, a lot of good leadership, a lot of knowledge. Some of it our folks can benefit from. Some of it we don't have. So, your recommendations are extremely important. But I talked about leverage when I first started. There are many things that we can do and we can't do within VS and APHIS. I can't lobby Congress for money. I can't. I can't lobby Congress that - some of your...

I read over the FMD vaccine bank recommendations. Those are great ideas. But I don't have the funding to proceed with some of those functions, okay. And I can't go to Congress and say, you need to give us additional money for this. That has to be a push from the industry. That has to be a push from the public.

I sat in the secretary's office probably three months ago. And we were trying to implement a process where we could bring a vaccine manufacturer to the United States. We don't test any vaccine here. We don't run any scientific experiments unless it's in BSL level three or four. And that's very expensive. So, we were trying to work on that. And the statement that I left the room was the industry has to get behind this. We can't do it ourselves. And I believe that's very true.

So, when we talk about vaccine bank and developing a vaccine every federal organization that you'll work with can only do as much as their funding allows. Appropriations - when you go to fight for appropriation money, you have to fight for new money, not change the funding. It's really just a rearrangement of the deck chairs. If they ask me for an assessment and take money away from one program area so that I can put it in another area.

So, when you ask for money, and when you go to the Hill and you're talking to those folks they need to understand no, no I don't want you to change the

appropriation. And that's what happens often. They're like, yeah, sure, we'll give them money in this area, but they'll have to cut this area. We have to get that money as new money, otherwise it does us no good. We just rearrange the deck chairs on top of the Titanic and it's very difficult. And we have to give something up.

So, I want us to work together in a partnership. I want us to come up with ideas about what our needs are. And then I want us to go away and say, here's our plan. Here's what you can do for me now. Here's what we need from this group. And your recommendations go to the Secretary. And eventually he reads them. Okay. So, it's very important that both sides of that story are in there because that's what he's looking for. Okay.

Another thing I would say is this, and then I'll stop. And I can do questions. We take this group very seriously. And I've - my staff as a whole has wanted this engagement. That's why we bring you here. I know it's hard to come to Washington D.C. It's expensive. It's a tough place to get into. But the majority of my leadership staff is here. In order for them to engage and my subject matter experts, it's got to be here. And I can do the most. And you can get the most out of us. And we can get the most out of you here.

So, when I was getting requests to have this meeting all over the country for convenience - for your convenience. And it's understandable. Nobody wants to fly clear - especially folks from California. My god, that's a long way. I made that trip. I apologize for that, but I want my folks to be a part of this. And I'm going to have them here. And I want you guys to here. And that's why we have changed the charter as we have.

That's all I want to say, Diane. I'll be glad to take questions. I'm sure I have ruffled a few feathers, which is my style. But glad to talk to anybody about anything I've said.

Willie Reed: About the Saul T. Wilson scholarship. The \$15,000 you mentioned that's per year.

Dr. Jack Shere: That's right.

Willie Reed: And how is that decision made in terms of the increase in funding? It's an internal decision in your office made by you or someone else.

Dr. Jack Shere: It was an internal decision - it was an idea put forward by me. It was discussed by my management team, and we discussed it as a team and came to a conclusion that it's something we needed to do. Now, we got no increase in funding. Other program levels are going to suffer. But if we look at what we spend on succession planning in VS, it's less than one percent of our budget.

Willie Reed: Okay. I think you would have a much bigger impact if you raise that amount to probably \$20,000. In state tuition I think that the runs are about that for most schools.

Dr. Jack Shere: You're right. We knew that.

Willie Reed: So, I think that would be much more attractive to the high quality candidates that you're seeking.

Dr. Jack Shere: Yes. And I agree. I think the issue is - it always goes back to where we find the funds. And we've really increased - for us, we've really increased our spending in that area tremendously just by making this leap, by adding the 12

or 13, I think we went to 17 this year. And we bumped it up an extra \$5,000.00. I don't know what the actual figures of that are but it's (unintelligible).

Willie Reed: We do appreciate it because I have several of my students have the Saul T. Wilson Scholarship, and it certainly helps. And the fact that they have summer opportunities is also a big bonus.

Dr. Jack Shere: Yes. And that's the thing I didn't say. When these students come on we - they have to serve a minimum 640 hours, a minimum. And for years our folks back in two years. That they thought that was the maximum. They cut them at off at 640. But, no, that's the minimum. Once they've worked that they've fulfilled their obligation to us for that summer work, and we bring them on after they graduate.

And we use a selection process which is pretty nice. We don't just stick them in a field position. We have the leadership all gather up where their positions are for that group, that class coming through and we make those available for the students to look at. And within reason we try to match them up to where they want to go whether it's a field spot, a slot in the lab, at spot out at SIA, wherever. Or some people want to go to state that they graduated from. Others want to go clear across the country. And we have that ability and it helps.

And our retention so far as I said with the Saul T. is about 60%. I want to see that go up. So, we've changed that. We mentor the students. We assign. They're naturally assigned a supervisor, but we assign them a mentor and a coach so that people are paying attention to them while they're going to school.

Man: Would you revisit and clarify a bit further expectations from this committee with respect to funding. I understand you cannot lobby. But I also have a perspective that given the mix in this room, it's very likely that some would think that either redirecting funds or seeking new funding is part of what will keep the country strong. And I hope you're not saying that we should never venture down that road in the future. I mean...

Dr. Jack Shere: No, I'm not saying that at all. What I'm saying... Here, let me be very straight. I don't know if you ever watched the hearings when we're asked to go up and testify in front of Congress. Congress always asks, do you have enough money to do what you want to do? Well, that's a really loaded question because I work for the president. The president sets a budget. He says, Dr. Shere, here's your budget.

And I go up to Congress. And Congress may ask me, do you have enough money to do what you want to do? If I say no, I've just slapped the President in the face. That's the budget he gave me. That's the budget I need to work within. And that's when I say, yes, Mr. Congressman, the money we have in our budget we can accomplish the goals that we have for that money.

I'm not saying it's enough. So, what I'm saying in that is not that we shouldn't lobby for more money, it's just that my folks can't. We can point to the problem. We can help you see the direction, but when it comes to actually getting the funds that's something that industry does. They do a better job than we could possibly do anyway. They've got the folks up on the hill. They know the right people to talk to.

So, that's step one. So, pointing out - and that's where committees like this are of use, pointing out where we can work together to benefit from that. We do put initiatives forward. For instance, two years ago when the VS management

team met one of the new initiatives that we put forward was preparedness because we just came out of working in a high path outbreak. And we thought what better time to ask Congress to consider a new initiative and perhaps fund it than on the heels of a high path AI outbreak.

So we did that. And it was pushed forward. Our agency decided to accept it. They pushed it forward to the secretary's level. It was pushed forward then to RM-B and lo and behold it got funded. That's a new initiative. That's an important initiative for us. There's \$20 million in that initiative for preparedness because we need it.

Because we fought the high path AI outbreak with a lot of contractors. We didn't have enough people in our ranks to oversee even with the contractors were doing. So, that outbreak probably costed the tax payers more money than it should have because of that oversight was not there.

I'm not saying that we can hire enough people to do all the work - we can't. But what we can do is hire and train enough people for oversight, so that we get good economy for what we're spending. So, those initiatives are taken forward. We do plan for that. That is part of what we do as a management team. But I can't go on the hill and ask for money.

A good example is the Foot and Mouth disease vaccine. There's all kinds of papers out there that say we need \$150 million a year. We need 25 million doses. We need all of these different strains. I agree. What's our strategy? Our strategy, what we'd like to have is vaccinate to live. Right now, with the funding that we have and the vaccine bank that we have we can handle a small outbreak.

And we have mitigation factors in place. But we will eventually, with that vaccine bank that's on hand, have to go to stamping out.

We won't have enough vaccine available - we won't - you can't even buy the vaccine availability unless you contract for it. That's the other thing that is an eye opening thing for us. You buy contracting space for them to produce the vaccine that you asked for. All the vaccine produced in a world right now by all the vaccine manufacturers is utilized by countries that have that have FMD currently.

So, we'd have to buy into that space. It's kind of like going into the supermarket and buying shelf space. That's what we'd have to do. And we'd have to contract for that. And we'd have to pay for it. Do we have the money for that right now? No. But there are options. And that's' where we look to - we explain that. And you lay your cards on the table. And we look to industry and other areas to carry our story forward. Does that help, or did I just go around your question?

Man: No. I think that helps. I would just suggest that some of the recommendations would likely best fit in budget proposals that happened within the department. Whether they survive the process is a whole different question. But so I was thinking in terms of (unintelligible) not you're having to go in before Congress and ask for new money outside of the budget that's been approved.

But also I think some of us represent the public. And you said it, that the public's input would be important with these issues. And so while the industry has a very important role I think the public has a very important role and just want to reemphasize that.

Dr. Jack Shere: And I'm sorry I keep saying industry. It's not industry. It's about everybody sitting around this table. Whatever your faction you represent, that's what I mean. And you're right about - let me talk - let me just speak briefly to your point about putting in our request.

When I - I get a certain budget and my budget generally is pretty flat. It has been flat. We've been going up steadily from - 2010 we had a pretty good budget. But after 2010 we just started going down. We lost over \$200 million in our budget. And I lost about 200 employees. I just couldn't pay for them anymore, so I let them go. So, when someone retired or they left, I just didn't replace them, which then a high path hit, I didn't have enough people. So, it's a viscous cycle.

So, now there's the recognition that we need the people and restock them. And that was because of the initiative we put forward. In light of that though, if there wasn't a high path and I asked for additional money in an area, I can put it in my budget. It has to fit then within the APHIS budget because my budget can grow, but it grows at the expense of the other programs within APHIS.

So, if I - I get about 235 million a year for my budget to carry out my programs. If I want to raise that and go to say AMR, antimicrobial resistance, I want more money for that, that's not an initiative that anybody thinks is important. And they do in this case - the President does. Let's say they didn't though and I thought it was important, and I wanted to raise it. Maybe the next administration won't - and I wanted to raise money for that.

And I said, I need \$10 million for that program. And I put it in my budget. Now, I'm currently at 245 million. Somebody else is going to take a cut somewhere unless I can get new money.

If it's money that's in the appropriations something else has to - or they turn to me and say, next year I'll give you that \$10 million for the AMR, but we're going to cut \$10 million out of your cattle funding as a result. So, there's a - we have given up often money for it to fit within the budget constraints that we're offered. We know the categories. We know if the budget's going to go up. We ask for extra money. It often gets cut. Never makes it to the floor. Might make it to the President's budget. May not be in the House or the Senate budget.

So those are all things we battle in the budget process. But, yeah, we do put initiatives forward oftentimes. It's almost like a set aside program. What are you going to set aside if you're going to do this? What aren't you going to do? And if I went to the sheep and goat industry and said, we're going to do this and we're going to take money out of your appropriations so that we can do AMR. They might not be happy with that. So, it's a balancing act is what it ends up being. But new initiatives do go forward. Other questions?

Don Ritter: Yes. Doc, is there any built-in - I don't know - inflation, raises, anything in your budget, or is it steady?

Dr. Jack Shere: There's a couple. Not that we get more money, but their increased cost that we get every year. So, if Congress decides to give our people raises - call those whatever - and they don't raise my budget, what they've essentially said is you need to pay these people more, but I'm not giving you more money.

So, you need to do less somewhere else. Okay. That's an -we just went through a budget process where we raised the salary rates just to cover the COLA. We can't hire more people, but we raised it to I believe \$4 million and it's just going to be so we can cover our salaries for next year.

So, that's a built-in expense. Now, we have built-in fixed costs and my opinions of some of them. We used to buy our own vehicles, and that was a process that we used. Now, current processes, let's lease them. You ever leased a vehicle and brought it in and it had dent in it or a scratch - they charge you. They charge you up front. My folks beat the heck out of their vehicles. Okay. So, I can hardly wait until I start turning these leased vehicles in and the charges that come with those.

It's cheaper on paper to lease them. It looks good. But my folks will go over the mileage. They'll beat the crap out of the. We'll turn them in and it'll cost us more money. That's a scary thing. But somebody did a model and said, hey, this is a good way to save the government money. I don't believe that's true. I think it's going to be a problem. And when I start to turn - because I used to be a field EMO. I used to use my truck to block if the cattle - if we didn't have enough fence. I'd put it - you know, and I have huge dents in it from that.

Long story short that's a fixed cost. That's going to increase. That eats into my budget. That eats into my operational ability. So, yes, those are things. And I don't know if that's your question, Don, exactly. But...

((Crosstalk))

Dr. Jack Shere: No.

Man: All right.

Dr. Jack Shere: Every year we shrink unless our budget goes - our funding goes up. So, that's a good question. And the answer is no.

((Crosstalk))

Dr. Jack Shere: I don't know the answer to that. Anybody else? I know last year we got an adjustment. We got an increase just enough to cover or COLA last year. This year they're talk - well, this year we're going to see our - because you know, the administration's going out. We're going to continue in resolution. Which a continue in resolution says, Doc, sure, you can spend the same amount every month that you spent last year based on your 2016 budget. No more. No less.

But if I give you a budget that's less than the '16, then you've got to make adjustments once you get that budget. And that's happened. That's kind of scary. So, I spend along - at the 2016 level. And of a sudden - but we don't anticipate that's going to happen, but it has.

So, that's problematic for folks. We spend along at a certain level then all of sudden, oh wait. We're not giving you that much, or you're not getting that money. We're hoping this year that we get the 2017 preparedness allocation. Usually on a continuing resolution you don't get that emergency money, that type of money until they give you a budget.

Well, our agency put in a special request that, that be cut loose early in the budget cycle system so that we can begin. Because a part of that is hiring people between 60 and 70 folks are going to come on board for VS. I can't hire them in that space - in a space in time. If I get my budget in April, which is consistently where I'm going to usually get it I can't hire that fast. I can't get those folks on. And Congress looks at that and says, well, Dr. Shere, you - we gave you \$20 million, you didn't spend it. So, it's a quandary.

((Crosstalk))

Dr. Jack Shere: We won't give it to you - guaranteed. We're going to use it to build our field force. We really need to use it for that. And that's - if we were looking to assist the states in any way the farm build is probably where we would lean. That's going to be - that model is already present. It's already in place. And we can copy that from the plant folks.

And I know that folks are saying, well, you know, VS is getting 20 million bucks. We're going to build our field force and our work force with that. And it's going to be a lot of field people but it's going to be the lab. It's going to be out at sea. It's going to be wherever we need that increased expertise to deal with the next outbreak. We're going to put that in place. And we still won't have enough. But it's the fire engine. No one wants to pay for the fire engine, unless there's a fire. I've been there.

Woman: (Unintelligible) or share a couple of thoughts which you may have already gone through. But I wanted to be able -what came to my mind when you were talking about your succession planning, and you touched on it a little bit in some of these - one of these pieces earlier just now.

When I think about the succession planning and what's going on with veterinary issues, our folks are looking at the lack of veterinarians in the field, private veterinarians and the crisis we're facing in finding large animal veterinarians to help the practitioners with day-to-day needs and preventive care.

And what I wonder - and you may already be doing this, but in the succession planning, you know, one of the first things that comes to my mind is integrating that with looking at the issue of the overall need for large animal veterinarians in this country. And I guess what (unintelligible) and I

understand coming from (unintelligible) perspective you made the point like if you can get someone to stay in federal practice for six years you've probably got them ten years. Man, you've got them good.

You know, we'd love to see people coming out of federal practice. Do these scholarships get these vets through, get them the experience and training with y'all and out of debt so that they can afford frankly the pretty low salaries they face out in the field in rural communities and get them out where, you know, for our folks.

So, you know, are there ways to start integrating that vision with what y'all need and also perhaps reassessing your need for senior people and how many senior people you need if you're looking at it as a complete picture with a private practice.

Dr. Jack Shere: So, I'll go way back to where you started with the scholarship program. We put it in place so that we could get more folks interested. And when you talk about them coming out of that program and going out into the field some will. But what we see is that actually the majority of folks are going the other direction. They've been in practice for five, ten years. They don't want to practice anymore. They come work for us. So, we're getting a lot of those folks.

So, some of those folks in the veterinary VMO CP program are those kind of people. They've been out. They've practiced. They're not enamored with it. They want to do something different. They want to change their career. Those are the folks we get.

I came from the field. I was a practicing veterinarian. One of the associates in our practice joined the PVPC program, wrote me letters and said, hey, Jack,

instead of working 90 hours a week and being on call all the time, you know, you should look into this. Forty hours a week. You got your weekends off. It's really not how it is, but that's what it was reported to be.

So, I was like, yes, that sounds great. I applied. And you know what they say, if you need a job with the federal government you're going to have a job. Eight months later, I got a letter saying, hey, come and do an interview. And so that's how I got into this.

Was I sick of practice? Not really. I still miss it. I miss parts of it. But what I was sick of was not having any kind of a life outside of practice. You know, I had a one-year-old son. I'd pick him up he'd cry because he didn't know who the hell I was. Who are you? You're never here. So, that's kind of what we see. The transition is into federal government work, not the other way. Now, we...

((Crosstalk))

Dr. Jack Shere: I know. So, getting to your question, we've seen and been aware of the problem with - and it really is a cross-up in all kind of areas with getting practitioners out in the field. First there has to be the practice to support it. And that's part of it.

There are programs out there - the veterinary scholarship program through NIFA where they pay through the scholarship and that they send veterinarians out into areas that are really in need of that work force.

So, you guys can put those ideas together and submit them through your state veterinarian and they can submit them up to us, and if there's an area that's

underserved and we can offer that, and if we find someone that will take that and place them there, then that's one way you can get a vet out in that area.

But there are - as far as our scholarship programs directing folks out there, that's probably not going to happen. The piece that might happen, and we might be able to discuss and this has been on the table many times is if there's an underserved area and we have folks in that area, what can we do to assist outside of getting into an area where there's ethic involved.

Woman: And I don't mean to focus it entirely on the scholarship actually. I mean that's just your angle. It's just looking at it as an entire picture of both public and private practice needs (unintelligible).

Dr. Jack Shere: And I was going to say one other thing, and I'll - this might strike home to some of the veterinary colleges and the folks who are sitting around the table. When I sit down and talk to them we talk about what's coming out of the vet schools. What's coming out of the vet schools right now are small - a lot of small animal practitioners. Probably - some deans have told me up to 90 percent of their graduating class is going to a small animal profession.

And we're tracking kids early. And so they - if they change their mind they may not be able to, and I don't know this for sure to get back over into large animals. When I went to school, we had to learn it all. Maybe tracking's a good thing.

If you're sure that's what you're going to do - you're going to be a small vet you're never going to change your career - veterinarians change their careers seven times - career paths seven times. That's statistically what we see.

So, I've talked with the -some of the colleges. I continue to talk with college deans about - and again, talking about my needs. What do I need coming out of vet school? I need a large animal practitioner too. Eight years ago for the first time, I had to start training the veterinarians that we were hiring on how to run a cattle chute, how to deal with large animals because they weren't large animal vets. They were small animal vets. They never put their hands on cows. That's a big change. We used to hire them right off the street.

So, working with the vet schools to say and some of them change the direction in curriculum - these are our needs. And that's what they need to understand. So, that's a partnership. That's you coming with me to the vet school and say, here's what I need. Okay.

(Mac Fernand): You know what I really hello. What I really think we need to solve the problem to second degree is to create like a physician's assistant veterinarian system assistant that can work independently. Right now, if they do that, (unintelligible) like a dog. You know, the guys, they've got don't even filed the teeth so far.

In Washington State, you know, it's a big lawsuit to a fellow, you know, he was fixing the tooth for a horse. But, you know, I really believe that will be a real good way to solve the problem. And, you know, in the country, many people that they are very qualified to do certain things, but they cannot do it for dollars.

Dr. Jack Shere: That's an interesting point, you know, and that's been suggested when it goes back to the veterinary practice facts in those states and how strong they are. And those were put in place probably - well, veterinarians look at the sanctity of their job and how much they can do.

And then as people begin to cut away at that they do pharmacy. They do dentals. They do washing, cleaning, hoof trims. The veterinarian profession gets a little down. So, I think some of those practice acts are in place because of that.

But considerations for the training program and what the practice act says - I came from Wisconsin. Our practice act's very strong. You've got - even if you ran a clinic and you had a person in the same room and you're on premises you have to be in the room where the vaccination is occurring. That really doesn't - that doesn't help you as a veterinarian getting work done. But properly utilized these technicians can be good for the practice.

(Mac Fernand): But (unintelligible) many.

Dr. Jack Shere: I understand where - and I've been... When I was in practice I slowly watched different entities chip away at the veterinary profession. And it's understandable why we got to where we are. The question is, if we're going to build that system, we have to build that trust. It takes time.

(Mac Fernand): Well, that happened in the medical profession. And it should be with the animal too, you know. And I think with time and the broker, you know, communication with the vet schools and maybe could be changed.

Dr. Jack Shere: Yes. I think we crank out some pretty good animal health technicians from some of the schools. I think it's just got to be, again, a partnership to decide how you're going to sort out that work and so that it doesn't harm either the profession or the income of those folks and people can work together. It's tough.

Man: Dr. Shere, what is the range of salary that you pay for somebody that's been out four or five years versus 15 years out in the country inspecting a slaughter plant? I mean are you competitive?

Dr. Jack Shere: Make sure I understand your question. Our range of salaries - is it - are you asking me based on time served do they get...

Man: Yes.

Dr. Jack Shere: Time served they're - let me just explain our pay scale. When you start working for us you may start at a base level. (Unintelligible) we hire veterinarians without experience, without any regulatory experience, we'd hire them as a GS-11 Step 1. I believe that starting salary is - anybody know for sure? Well I know the 12 - Step 1 is a \$75,000 salary, which is a pretty good salary. That's competitive with I think with what vets get when they come out of school.

After they serve one year fresh out of school as 11 - Step 1, they go to a 12 - Step 1. Then for the next four years, they get an increase, what's the called a stepping grade each year which amounts to about anywhere from 2 to \$3000 they go up. Okay. Then for the next three - for the Steps 5, 6, and 7 there's two years in between those steps. And again they get those increases. Then 8, 9, and 10 there's three years between each step.

Once they get to a 10, unless they go to the next series, the next level, they go from a GS 12 to a GS 13, which usually is considered a promotion. If they don't go up, they stay at a 12 Step - at our 12 Step (pan) for the rest of their career. But they get locality pay. Now, our 13 - I'm trying to think of - our 15's can make up to \$150,000 a year. So, it's a pretty good salary.

Diane Sutton: Plus overtime.

Dr. Jack Shere: Plus overtime. Yes. If they work overtime...

Diane Sutton: That's good overtime.

Dr. Jack Shere: Yes. Our pork vets are probably the only ones to get - they get - our pork vets get over time. And they used to get hazard pay. But they don't any more. They've gotten that taken away.

So, I can provide - or if you guys with our pay scales are - we have a standardized pay scale. And then there's the rest of the US. And then there's what's called locality pay. If you live in an expensive area like Colorado or D.C. you get locality pay. And it's increase over what the normal folks get. And that's only four GS level folks. Our senior executives don't get locality pay.

Liz Wagstrom: Do they - for FSIS that you were asking about, the slaughter plant, they - you can't... You have to be a citizen, correct, to work for the federal government?

Dr. Jack Shere: I believe that's true.

Liz Wagstrom: Because one our state meat inspectors are actually foreign trained, like (unintelligible) with recruiting.

Dr. Jack Shere: It's a struggle.

Man: It's competitive.

Liz Wagstrom: It's very competitive.

Diane Sutton: Dr. Shere, as we get into the implementation of the veterinary feed directive come January 1... Now, I'm not a vet. I'm the producer in the room. Two of us. But you have a vet shortage as it is. And now we have all these mandates coming down. Do you have anything - any plan to handle this increase? Not only for demand from our side, but who's going to do the leg work, the foot work to check up on all this? And who's funding all that?

Dr. Jack Shere: So the Veterinary Feed Directive is an FDA rule. We in VS didn't implement it. We did - we....

Diane Sutton: I know. But it's going to fall on you to...

Dr. Jack Shere: Right. What we'll have to do and what we'll - and I read the veterinary - the feed directive. What I think is going to have to happen is they're just going to have to run it like a prescription service. And a lot of the medicated fees are coming off market. So, you're going to have - the veterinarian's going to write a script. That script will go to the feed. Whoever the mill is, they'll mix it up.

Diane Sutton: And I understand all that, but there's a lot of people who do not have access to these vets.

Dr. Jack Shere: Yes. And it isn't going to be VS or APHIS that directs that or that we provide that. It won't come from us. So, what you're asking is who's going to help you get - it's the same thing in the buying stations and the sale barns.

That's our rule that says, you got to have a veterinarian present when - so, we've relaxed that to that to say that it has to be accessible, meaning you can call them. They can come down. They can deal with whatever the issue is. I don't know how the FDAs going to manage that. They've been told by us that

we don't - that there aren't enough veterinarians in the field to do those scripts and to get that medicated feed and to monitor it.

Diane Sutton: And then, was it earlier this year - when did they have the Senate to - the FMD hearing. Was that like in January? Was that the (unintelligible)...

Dr. Jack Shere: Are you talking about the -when the industry went up and...

Diane Sutton: Yes.

Dr. Jack Shere: That was January I believe.

Diane Sutton: Yes. Wasn't it January?

Dr. Jack Shere: Yes.

Diane Sutton: I've never heard any more from that. The only thing I heard from some of the Congress people that we visited with was, well, we didn't realize it was an issue. No one has ever asked us for any funding. So, it's the chicken and the egg again.

Dr. Jack Shere: You're right.

Diane Sutton: You know, you want us to push it, but at the same time they're telling us that they have to hear from you that they need it.

Dr. Jack Shere: So, I brief the staffers all the time. They call me up on these issues. I've talked to them. And I've only been up here three years. I've talked to them several times about the FMD issue and what we do have and what we don't have. I briefed them before that Senate hearing with the industry.

They asked me well, what do you have? I said, “Well, this is our vaccine bank. This is what it consists of.” What’s the problem? The problem is, yes, we realize we don’t have the vaccine that we need to have a (unintelligible) strategy. But we also don’t have the funding. And the argument is, who pays for it? That’s the crux of the biscuit. Who’s going to fork over the door - dough?

Many people think, well, this is a food safety issue. It’s for the nation. We’re protecting the food supply. So, the government should pay for it. Well, the government doesn’t see it that way. They see it as a partnership that both sides have to pay. Okay.

And I don’t know if you noticed several of those Congress folks asking industry, what are you willing to pay? That was on the table every time that they brought - and that comes from the briefings that we give them, that these are the issues.

So, we’re talking to them, they’re talking to the industry. They’re talking to the private individual. Everybody’s talking. But for Congress to say we’re not aware, well, they may not be because they may not have been in office when we briefed them the last time. It’s not a new issue.

And everybody on the hill that’s on the AGRIPOPES committee, they know the issue. They know it’s an issue. There’s no suggestion of how to solve it, but they know it’s an issue.

So, some say, well this is the first time we’ve heard this. I would disagree with that. I think the industry - different sectors of the industry have been up there

and talked about it. We have certainly talked about it. Just like your shortage of veterinarians, that's been talked about.

They know that when they implement this rule on the feed that it's going to cause a problem for the producers. They don't have that solution. So, that's another thing that no one's offered an answer for. But to say we haven't briefed them yet, we've briefed them. We have papers now.

Politics is a funny thing. Yes. You learn about a lot of politics when you come up here. We may write something, and say this is our direction, and put it forward through our organization. It may not go any farther than across the - to the next office.

And I may be told no, we're not ready for that yet. That's great. That's forward thinking. You're being proactive, but we're not there yet. Or maybe the administration isn't ready to take that forward. Or if the administration does decide to take it forward maybe Congress shoots it down. It's a lot of politics.

So, sometimes it takes that outside voice to say well, this is a problem. And you need to help APHIS get this, or tell APHIS to do this. Okay. We may have said we need to do it. We may have briefed up and say that we need to do it. They may be well aware of it, but they're like we haven't heard anything from the public. It doesn't seem like it's much of a problem.

I think the industry and the public underestimate the strength of their lobby on Congress and what that does. I think it's very powerful. You know, you won't get it the first time. And you've got to really stick to it. But I can tell you the different parts of industry that do a good job in their lobby they had

more funding in our appropriation. It just happens. It's a miracle. It's like give us the money and send them away.

I don't know if you watched Shawshank Redemption. You ever seen that movie? I want to write a letter every day. That didn't work, I write too. When they find out he's getting money, they go away.

I think that, that persistent pays off. Because you got to remember you maybe working on a guy for years, then he - maybe he doesn't get re-elected. They start over. So, I see that. We're going through a transition now. It's going to be amazing how much doesn't get done in the next six months, stuff we want to do that we...

Our job, my job, the Senior Executive's job is to explain to the politicians when they come in what it is we do, and why it's important and why it should be refunded. That's what I'm going to be doing. That's what my staff's going to be doing. That's what a lot of us are going to be doing the next six months.

When that new administration comes in after the reelection, we need to educate and not be offensive. Because if you offend...

Woman: You're done.

Dr. Jack Shere: ...you're done. Yes. So, we got to be - and often hear, you know, veterinarians as a rule we can be a little arrogant about talking about what - and people laugh, but it's true. I think we're taught that way in school. We're taught we have to command of the situation. We've got to take care of that animal. We got to make those decisions. And that carries over into our normal work and daily life.

So, I have to educate. My staff has to educate. We have to be patient. And it'll pay off. And we got to provide the information 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 times and not grumble about it. Because maybe, yes, I sent that up, but maybe this person didn't read it or didn't know about. And I'll send it up again. That's going to be the next six months of our lives.

So - and it's important that we do a good job with it. Because I can tell you what we do for animal health is very important. And that they understand that. When the administration comes in (unintelligible) and they have their agendas, somehow we got to make our agenda, their agenda by working into...

You know, (unintelligible) he wasn't interested in big agriculture when he started. Wasn't on his work plate. He just had other things he wanted to work on. But now, if you go talk to that man now, he understands the important especially after what we went through with high path of the work that APHIS does and how important this little agency is in regards to that work. So...

Woman: So, I guess that's where by question...

Dr. Jack Shere: Sorry. Am I taking too much time? That's always the case.

Woman: I guess that's where my question. I understand that you have a limited budget. And it sounds like you're even almost a little put off by some of the things in our reports that say the agency should (unintelligible).

Dr. Jack Shere: No, not put off. Just I want to understand it.

Woman: So, you know, we're technically advising the secretary not advising the USDA. And the recommendations that are in those reports are going to the

Secretary who theoretically has the ear of the President and who should be able to lobby for new money and other things.

So, one of the philosophies in our reports was that we should address what we really believe not what we think is expedient for somebody that potentially can make new end roads.

And so for the committee to say in previous years the FMD bank for example needs money and then say reiterate that it needs money and then reiterate again that it needs money, and that perhaps, you know, the industry isn't going to step forward because the industry isn't even allowed to buy the vaccine without the acknowledgement or the support of the government in an outbreak that that's a better way to approach it.

So, you said you're working for the President and you have trouble saying you need money. But we're suggesting that the secretary should go and say we need the money.

Woman: And to add to that, we represent the tax payers. Not necessarily public or industry, but the tax payers.

Dr. Jack Shere: So, I'm not really understanding.

Annette Jones: A lot of places.

Dr. Jack Shere: So, let me tell you the real crux of what happens with your recommendations. They get to the Secretary and it's like, Dr. Shere, why aren't you doing this?

Woman: Well, why aren't you, Jack?

Dr. Jack Shere: It's pretty simple. I don't have that funding. I don't have that backing. And, yes, it's great to say that. It's great to shove it up there and have him look at it and have the President look at it. But what the government's looking for now is partnership. What do we do?

And what do you do? What can we do? How can we work together? It's not all about - I think the attitude that the government will take care of it, that's not pervasive. Certainly isn't something that I think that is going to work.

Annette Jones: Then I think...

Woman: Well, can I...

Annette Jones: I think we need to rephrase our discussion then, because there is a partnership. Industry pays for their own veterinarians. Industry pays for their own biosecurity. Industry pays for...

Dr. Jack Shere: Well, I'm not saying they don't, Annette.

Annette Jones: ... they pay for accredited veterinarians. So, when we get the pushback, there needs to be a partnership. The answer should be, there is a partnership. And this is where the taxpayers expected the government to come to the table, and that's to... And even at least up front fund a vaccine bank even if when it's used industry pays for its use. At least up front fund it. Kind of like (cop) insurance.

Dr. Jack Shere: So realistically let me talk about it a different way. My budget's \$235 million. The idea that the government's going to give me another \$150 million to fund a vaccine bank is ridiculous. It's not going to happen. That's over half of my funding.

And I realize the industry puts things forward and that you guys represent the public. But what I'm saying is tuitions have to be joint. And that's all I'm saying is we need to find a way to work on it together. We do this. You do this. That's all I'm saying.

I'm not saying that I'm looking for more money. I can percolate alone with what I've got and keep doing what I'm doing. The hardest part though is when I want to do something new and different because I don't have that funding to do that.

I can keep doing what I'm doing. I can make cuts - small cuts here and there. I can change the way I work with programs and the things I do with those programs. But new initiatives, big initiatives - and I'm not saying that the industry and public are not doing what they're supposed to. What I'm saying is, I can't make that push by myself. I needed the help and assistance. And doing that with what the industry's going to do, what the public's going to do, I'm just being realistic.

I mean you can send your recommendations up. And they can say I should do this, and I should do that. And that's fine. And I'll do what I can. And I didn't want to be offensive on this, but I know what I can do, and what I won't be able to do. And I know what I'll be asked to do based on what comes out of this committee.

nd we'll go back and we'll try to - we'll put together ideas of how we should and could do things, but it all boils down to funding. And that's really where that river meets the road on everything. And if the funding's there we certainly can do a lot. And we do a lot with very little.

Diane Sutton: (Unintelligible) to share. First of all, having sat on this committee now for 6 years I want to say that I appreciate your bluntness and this dialogue that we're having right now. I think it's a valuable. I think it would have been valuable to have it over the last six years more. And I hope that it continues at this level.

To add a little bit to what Belinda was saying to share because I sat on this committee and we've done this (unintelligible) year after year after year. And we knew frankly that, you know, Dr. Clifford couldn't make the funding happen.

There was no expectation that it was going to be, you know, the person sitting in chair doing it. The thought process was two-fold.

One - and I only speak for myself as for why I was supportive of these recommendations. One - was to try to send the message that this diverse group of both industry practitioners, you know, so general public representatives supported the idea that there needed to be public funding for FMD in the hopes that this would provide some pressure at the levels above you - at the presidential level of the appropriate, you know, that this would be something that, you know, could be shared with the appropriations committee and here's what the advisory committee is saying to USDA. We can't do it without congressional support.

So, as something that could be not - instead of individuals' efforts to lobby for more funding for FMD vaccine bank, but in addition to individual sectors doing that lobbying the voice of a sort of, you know, a consensus in this whole group.

The other part, what we keep running into - and I think that's something that's true of all our recommendations. I think it was particularly true on FMD, but a lot of where we said agency should, agency should, agency should, yes, we got that it's not that you guys get to wave a magic wand and make it happen. And the hope was that like part of the message communicated would be what can we do to make this happen? I don't know how else to have phrased it. And I think that's a good question.

I mean, and so I'm looking forward to seeing - as we sit here as the Secretary Advisory Committee of Animal Health how do we phrase it differently. The other part specifically (unintelligible) FMD, is we keep running into this. If I could go back and tell my people that they could get the vaccine they would pony up for it in a heartbeat.

The hard part about going back to my people and saying, guess what? This is going to be a cautionary program because (unintelligible) federal money is I'm sorry, we have incredibly thin profit margins. We don't have the money for everything we need to do. And we don't even know if we'll be allowed to have access to this vaccine if and when it happens.

So, that's our problem. I mean that's where we're at. And until that song - and our producers, you know, I represent (unintelligible) smaller scale producers, a lot of people selling direct market - until our folks have some assurance that they're paying for something they're going to be able to have access to and need, they're just not going - they're not going be interested in that.

Dr. Jack Shere: So, let's talk about that a little bit. So, a vaccine strategy, if we put it in the hands of the industry and say just go and vaccinate, the industry would say, and naturally so, you give me the vaccine, I'm going to go vaccine what - my

sector. That's not a strategic or epidemiologic plan. So, the government initially in an outbreak is going to control the vaccine.

But with time if we go to vaccinate to live and we had to vaccinate to get out of this it's going to be on sale and it's going to be revaccinate and that industry will buy it. But we have to have enough vaccine in the bank to start there. We don't have that to start there. Okay.

Woman: (Unintelligible) the partnership would be ongoing vaccinate to live, yes, that (unintelligible).

Dr. Jack Shere: Well, I think you can get there. I really do. I think through the farm bill if you - but that's two years away. If this happens tomorrow, I can tell you what's going to happen. We're going to stamp it out. We're going to vaccinate what we can. We'll run out of vaccine really quickly, and we'll begin stamp out procedures.

Belinda Thompson: I want to - oh...

Dr. Jack Shere: But let me just finish this thought. The idea that the industry won't have access to this vaccine is not true. Matter of fact, even the labeling that we're talking about will be - there's two sets of different labeling processes that we're going to use for the vaccine that the industry uses in a vaccine that we use governmentally just because it has to be that way.

Belinda Thompson: The part of what we need I think I particularly like looking towards the farm bill, and office lobbying of the farm bill is a clear statement from the USDA that explains it. Because my folks, frankly, I'm still working on educating and working and getting them a clear message through that, you

know, the government policy of automatic eradication. We stamp it out and that's the only option.

They're still, you know, because that was the policy for years, and years and - for a long time. And it's less convincing also by the way. If I go back and say, yes, here's the new Red Book, and here's this great big, big thing. And if you dig through it, you'll see that there's a new policy. If you, you know - and I tell you what my folks would need.

And we mobilize the public, you know, because our folks have a lot of direct to consumer connections. We mobilize around public funding. But we need our folks to have a very clear understandable statement from USDA about how this vaccine would be used, about how this would be structured. And then I think maybe we could see a lot more, you know, a lot better mobilization.

Dr. Jack Shere: So, that's what I meant when I talked about the partnership is having those clear discussions and laying that on the table, so that we provide you with what you need. You take it back and then we work together if it's a funding issue on a funding issue or whatever it may be.

Please understand me, I don't mean to insult. I just I'm a realist. And I know what this committee's capable of and I want to use that versus not getting what we can out of this group.

And that's really what's important to me, because I think you guys can do a lot for moving these initiatives forward. Agencies should. And the agency would if they could, but they don't have the wherewithal often to do those things.

I know who you represent. I know the Secretary reads your recommendations. But in my organization that then comes back to me saying, what are you doing in these areas? So, I'll spend time answering your recommendations - what I can and can't do. So, that's better to have that understanding up front I think. I'd rather do it that way than fill out a lot of paperwork on what I need to be doing or what I'm not doing.

((Crosstalk))

Dr. Jack Shere: Yes. We'll have a strategy for a vaccine in the event of an outbreak. But will we have the tool? So, what I've talked to industry about is the tool there or is not there? I can build a house if I've got the right tools and do a really good job. But if I don't have the tools, I build a shack. So, there's a difference. That's - and I don't want to dwell on that anymore. I hate talking about funding. I like to talk about what we can get done with what we have.

Man: (Unintelligible) your written statement about leveraging the committee (unintelligible) animal health services (unintelligible) can you or someone of your staff provide the guidance (unintelligible) US Animal Health Association?

Dr. Jack Shere: I think we can. And I think that's why I want the level of engagement that we've established and that you're going to see in our group now. I think we've been too long away from the table with you guys. It's time to get to back of the table. One of the directions I got when I got this job from my administrator was reengage the domestic programs and the folks and make sure that you rebuild those partnerships. And that's my goal. I may be blunt. I may be - I'm perfectly honest. I'll tell you - that's one thing you're going to learn about me is I'll just tell you what I - where the river meets the road with me. I won't sugarcoat it. So...

Diane Sutton: Jack, thank you so much. This has been a great level of discussion. And thanks for all the engagement of everyone around here. I think we have a challenge in front of us on how to go forward for this meeting. So, I think that is - you put us on a mission for hopefully success with those next two days. And we look forward to working with you, you know, in the rest of our journey. Thank you so much.

Dr. Jack Shere: Thank you. I appreciate the time. And I'm sorry if I offended anybody.

Woman: Hello, Operator.

Coordinator: Please standby. The conference call is taking approximately a 10-minute break at this point. Please stand by while the presenters take a brief break.

Liz Wagstrom: These slave drivers here and put you back to work. Operator, we're going to go ahead and get started again. Do we - has anyone joined us in the speaker room?

Woman: We're getting ready to start.

(Dana Cole): Yes. This is (Dana Cole).

Liz Wagstrom: Thank you. Thank y'all for the abbreviated break. I realize that we're pushing through pretty hard today. Wanted to next introduce LeAnn, Dr. LeAnn Thomas who is the director of the Avian, Flying and Aquatic Health Center. And we had a lot of interaction with LeAnn. If you recall, in our last meeting as we discussed, the emerging diseases response plan.

And she has a couple things we're visit with about and we'll look at having come robust discussion around both the human infections of salmonella associated with live poultry as well as the ongoing discussion around the Emerging Disease Response plan and the (NL-red).

So, LeAnn, I'll turn it over to you. Thanks.

Dr. LeAnn Thomas: Good morning everybody. And thanks, Liz, for my introduction. For those of you who know (Eric Gonder) - glasses, big grey beard. So obviously, I'm not (unintelligible).

So, going to change topic a little bit to an issue that VS has actually been dealing with for several years. And as you can see in the introductory notes is that we have been asked by our colleagues at CBC Public Health, Animal Health Officials to assist in investigations about break of human salmonella inspections due to contact with live poultry.

And so upfront, I want to exclude the issue of food borne salmonellosis. But we're looking at a very specific subset of salmonellosis infection in humans. And the data at CDC has generated from January of this year to July is there have been several ongoing outbreak investigations. Forty-five 45 states and 611 individuals have been diagnosed with salmonella infections.

And I'd like to do a poll here. How many of you are aware of individuals that have either - and I'll use ducks as the example - have baby ducks, and the baby ducks are put in the bathtub with the children at nighttime for bath time. Has anybody ever heard of that? Okay. So, that's what we're dealing here with in some cases.

So, DS involvement has included assisting with the trace back. They have the information providing as needed laboratory support looking at local communications and coordination, and particularly getting out information about best management practices.

This was a handbook that was developed in March of 2014. And it was intended to assist the segment of the industry in maintain practices to decrease salmonella contaminations at the hatchery level.

There is also a voluntary salmonella monitored program under the National Poultry Improvement Plan. And again, it's a voluntary program for the hatching industry to prevent, and control and hopefully to reduce the level of salmonellosis.

And one of the things that I want to stress is that it is a voluntary program. Although the impactee is in our code of federal regulations. There is nothing that mandates or requires a hatchery producer from participating in the program.

And the reason that we're bringing this to this group is that it's an issue that according to the stats is continuing to increase. Most of you have heard about Salmonella enteriditus. But it's other salmonella stereotypes as well that are causing these infections. And it is not uncommon for a chicken or a duck to have salmonella - be shedding salmonella, yet be clinically normal.

And so because of the breadth of the issue, it's not just the poultry issue, it's obviously a public health issue. It's a large communication issue in educating the public that it's not a good idea for your child, your grandchild, your friends children. to bathe in the same bathwater as the duck, as enticing as that may be.

So we're looking to this group to provide input into the creation of a subcommittee that would function under the SOCHA that would consist of individuals from our NPIP office, Official State Agency. And the Official State Agency representative is that individual at the state level that has the overall responsibility for the specific state program.

We want to get State Ag and Animal Health representatives as well, ARS, obviously CDC and Public Health Partners. And a big component of this is the retail market, the hatchery, the commercial production, because it's really, one of the focus is that retail outlet.

There was information that was shared last week at the NPIP Annual Meeting, the Bi-Annual Conference, and CDC presented information. And they had a chart of human acquired salmonella infections due to live poultry. And would anybody hazard a guess as to when the peak of those infections occurred? Easter. It's a beautiful bell curve.

So at least we know the season, if we have to choose a season to focus our activities on. We know what that season is.

So there are some questions that we have generated at just a first blush of what the subcommittee might assist with. And it looks at poultry associated salmonellosis prevention effort. And what should DF do, more differently? What should CDC do, state, public health and animal health officials, poultry producers, and retail outlets? Other things again better - different that can be done in regards to helping reduce the level of human salmonellosis.

Are there further educational opportunities for the public that we should be taking advantage of? The Best Management Practices Handbook that I

mentioned earlier, are there edition modifications needed to that document? Are there better ways to advertise information in that book or distribute the handbook? How to get more participation in the NPIP monitored program? And the subcommittee may come up with additional questions that they would like to address.

So we're looking for the committee's guidance in providing recommendations for individuals that have the appropriate knowledge and skill set to help address this issue. There's no – and I'd also like to say is that it's been mentioned that we're entering a time where regulations are not going to necessarily be granted quickly, so we're probably looking at non-regulatory type of activity, certainly for the short term.

But I'd open it up now for any questions or comments that the group has.

((Crosstalk))

(Dave Smith): Okay, sorry I'll start all over again. I think the one question I really have in my mind is with the rapid growth of urban poultry ownership and that area, I think that's a really important area that we try to reach into in terms of trying to get a handle on how to maybe make an improvement.

Because I really think that that's one of the areas where there's going to be quite a bit of direct human poultry interaction, with a group of people that probably don't have the level of craft expertise or understanding.

And I think that's an important component as we try to address this problem. Because it's such a – I don't know, at least in the southwest, urban poultry are exploding. And it's in urban areas and it's in backyards. And I think that's one of those areas where we need to think about reaching out to.

Liz Wagstrom: It's the new cat.

(Dave Smith): Definitely.

Liz Wagstrom: As one of my staff members said, down from L.A., it's the new cat.

Stephen Crawford: And what I was going to say is, I think looking at the list of who you're looking for, for the subcommittee, it struck me that that was completely missing. And if you don't involve them at the level of discussing these issues and you develop all the plans and education materials, and then try using them just as outreach, it's not going to be as successful as if you bring them on to the subcommittee.

I mean there are people who are experts in backyard poultry. I don't know if she'd be willing to serve, but there's a woman in Austin, a farmer, who teaches backyard poultry classes and has hundreds of people coming to her classes several times a year. There's the Funky Chicken Book Tour in Austin, and their organizers work with the backyard poultry community. And that's just Austin. We can find...

Liz Wagstrom: It's replicated around the country.

Stephen Crawford: It's replicated around the country. We can find representatives. It's a question of finding somebody who's willing to serve the time on it.

Man: I'd suggest, we've got extension veterinarians that are poultry specialists that would be, we probably should include extension veterinarians on the list of people in subcommittees.

Man: And also reaching out to that backyard poultry group, there are publications like Backyard Poultry Magazine, Backyard Chicken. There are lots of those kinds of sources available online that you can get at and get out something. Because people go to that sort of place for that kind of information.

The same thing with Tractor Supply, or some of the biggest outlets, that they just have some kind of fun. So don't swim with them, you'll get salmonella.

(Dave Smith): Well people often get a kid sized pool, you know those 10 foot, foot deep pools and they put the ducks in those or baby geese in those. And of course you know if you've got little kids they're going to go jump in that water unless you do something to keep them out. So some kind of signage that they can put up. Just the information that they need to do that may be enough.

(Leanne): I'm curious to hear from the State veterinarians because you guys are stuck with what to do in your state, about enforcement and stuff. And so the city, they can have recommendations, and the USDA can have recommendations, but nothing's really going to happen unless there's some way to either control or disseminate within your states.

Liz Wagstrom: We actually, in California we are working on one of the more recent outbreaks, along with several other states, and we had that dilemma. And we've had that dilemma over the years in the past, and we've always declined to assist gathering surveillance samples on the breeder farms because we knew that there is pathogens and feces of animals. So we knew we'd find Coggins in feces of animals, and we weren't really sure that would help CDC reduce the outbreak, when the real issue was behavior.

So in the past, we've actually declined to be of assistance, but this year in kind of the spirit of one health, and our poultry producers were on board and

volunteered. And we did assist them and collected samples from a couple of different breeder flock, just to see if we could – it's kind of academic. So but then what do you do about it?

So I think your question is very relevant. It's not a regulatory issue because again, we know that there's feces in live animals, right? It comes out that end and feces, all feces have positives in it or ought to. So there's really nothing to do besides working with the producer and NPIP. And we did find a few things that could be approved with the back processes thing, so I think there is a roll for BS and for CN will help officials on a voluntary basis.

And I think the producers were happy to have a third party, some feedback. Because sometimes even if you think you have the best practices, having a third party who is a friendly third party come and say, 'Well maybe if you just separate it here maybe you'd reduce the transmission' something like that. So that was pretty helpful.

But I think the outreach in California, I know our extension that's mentioned, they're very, very active with backyard poultry. I think that's the same across the country now. So I think it's a great idea and I think you definitely have input from the right people on this committee. Even HSC I think could play a role, behavior best practices. How do you take care of your little duck properly?

(Dave Smith): It would. But what are all the purposes? Eggs, meat?

Liz Wagstrom: The pets.

(Dave Smith): Pets. What are we talking? One or two or five?

Liz Wagstrom: Yes. It really is. It's the new – like I said, I said it facetiously, but it's the new cat in a lot of urban environments. Instead of a cat they'll have a chicken or a duck or whatever.

Man: And in some states, like in Arkansas, you talk about a minimum of six.

Man: I had a woman that called me up and she had five chickens that she was using as service animals for an extended living facility. So they fill a lot of different roles.

(Dave Smith): So the point of sale, there's got to be some mandatory point of sale training material of some kind. I don't know if the states get involved with that. Or you said you had a bell curve around Easter. Those are newbies, people getting them for their kids for the first time.

But I know they're going to say, 'Well nobody told me. And a poster in a feed store is not good enough. It's going to have to be when you buy chickens you're going to get the chickens and the feed, and you're going to get these two pieces of paper and you're going to read them and you're going to sign them before you leave. Okay?

And that's what the states could help with, some kind of point of sale training, sign off sheet to educate these people. And may I help volunteer from the commercial production site, and we try to target zero types of human health concern, but it's a reduction.

Foster Farms was vaccinating for Heidelberg and their breeders, and they still had a big issue. So it's not a foolproof system. But I think education at point of sale kind of required education. And I'm not saying a fire arms thing,

where you have to go to class and everything. But some kind of basic sheet could go a long way to help them raise awareness.

It's kind of like the little baby turtle thing. Like there was no way to get the salmonella out of the Red Sliders, or whatever they were called, so the State banned them. And I'm not saying we want to ban the chickens, but we have to educate these people.

Man: Along the lines of what Annette was saying earlier, we worked with our public health folks and a number of folks in New Hampshire that were affected. And we've had fairly good success between our agency and extension, getting feed stores to voluntarily provide some education. And not a poster, but we provide them some one-Pagers.

I'm not convinced yet how effective that is, because it's a nominal inconsistency. From store to store and who's working this day to that day. And I think we got update by the feed stores because it was voluntary. I would imagine we would have had a real hard time mandating it, because they don't have anybody to do the enforcement to follow up on it.

I don't think I'm opposed to what you're saying in concept. I guess I would like to see how it would work. We've had reasonable success with the voluntary approach and that's just the one's getting it at feed stores. The one buying and picking up at the post office, I don't know how you do that education at point of sale.

And I'm still trying to sort of pull through numbers based on our imports and which one of those is more in New Hampshire. I don't know. But I think if we mandated education for this group, there's at least as big a group, maybe a bigger group that we're not touching. I don't know how to touch them.

Liz Wagstrom: So what I'm hearing is that we've got a lot of interest around this table and this topic. And so, Leanne, if we were to have a motion to develop such a subcommittee and ask for volunteers and then we can give some more input to the volunteers. Is that how you perceive this best working? So is there a motion to support development of a subcommittee to work on the salmonella live poultry contact issue?

Stephen Crawford: I'll second it, but I have a question. Is it a subcommittee or an advisory committee? Because if we're talking about pulling people that are not subcommittee is a small group of this committee advisory we'll pull folks from outside here to be involved?

(Leanne): The way subcommittees work within FUQUA is you can put anybody you want on the subcommittee. We just can't put 50% or more of this committee on the subcommittee because then it's considered a part of the FUQUA community itself.

Liz Wagstrom: So Dave Smith made the motion, Steve seconded it. And I'll open it up for further discussion.

Stephen Crawford: Just to clarify the point that it won't be limited to the categories that are currently listed, that the nominations will be opened beyond it.

Liz Wagstrom: Yes, it was, oops, forgot to put the 'g' others. So that's why we presented it. But certainly due to, see my suggestion about somebody who can represent backyard producers and extension veterinarians, is we're just asking this group to nominate those individuals that would be best able to help get a recommendation that will, I won't say eliminate the problem, but maybe in a couple of years, we won't see a bell curve outbreak around Easter.

(Leanne): So I think the way Robert's rules would probably work as well, vote on this motion and then we'll ask for volunteers for the subcommittee. So is there any further discussion?

(Dave Smith): Just help for those that are new on the committee how a subcommittee works. Is this for a one year appointment? Is this indefinite? Exactly how it works.

Liz Wagstrom: People have a set term. We haven't decided exactly how long that will be. It will probably be somewhere in the one year area.

(Leanne): Any further discussions?

Man: Well yes additional clarification. I was just waiting for this discussion here to stop before I asked it.

Liz Wagstrom: Go ahead.

Man: This is also kind of an open meeting thing where we have public call in's and records and travel, or is this...

Liz Wagstrom: It can be run either way. Our current plan is that it will be done primarily by phone and we don't intend to hold all the subcommittee meetings as open meetings. At some point, the committee may decide it is appropriate to have somewhere in which we take public comments, in order to capture any stakeholder input that we haven't gathered through the committee members themselves. But that'll be a subcommittee decision along with the staff support staff is working with them.

Man: One last procedural question. When you said that the next step after this would be to have people volunteering, so what we'll have is a few people who volunteers off of this, and then there'll be a period of time where the full committee is still offering nominations for those who sit on it.

And of course you guys will be pulling in obviously CDC and other context homeland and then it will be formed.

Liz Wagstrom: Right. Well, we'll put together all the nominations that whoever, I mean not just this committee but whoever else wants to make a nomination makes, and then we'll try to put together the best representative group that we can and still maintaining a reasonable size.

And with regard to, obviously if everybody in this room volunteers we'll have to – after we take the list of volunteers we may have to cut it down a bit. But if you want to volunteer, go ahead and we may have to quietly say I'm sorry but we're full.

Man: I was thinking of volunteering temporarily in lieu of let's see who else you can find from Backyard Poultry World. There are better people but we'll see.

Liz Wagstrom: That was a great discussion. Any further discussion?

(Leanne): Well, there's just one follow-up comment. If you know somebody that you think would really be good, and you're willing to have us contact them, reach out to them and explain, we'd certainly be happy to have those names, too.

Liz Wagstrom: Awesome. All those in favor say aye.

Group: Aye.

Liz Wagstrom: Any opposed? Nay? Motion passed. So with that I think it's time for the show of hands of people here that would like to volunteer to serve on the subcommittee. I think I heard Don say he could be involved, and Peder, Judith. Steve, Kenny Adema, or Matt.

Thank you. And I think if you all have ideas on topics and thoughts, we've got these numbers that we can give the information to or thoughts on this issue.

Next we get to call Leanne back, I believe. And we have Doctor Dana Cove from SIA in Fort Collins on the phone.

But we wanted to continue our discussion on the emerging animals' disease, Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Plan. We had a lot of discussion on our June conference call. And I think we then got to a point on that where we were unsure of what the questions were and where we wanted to go.

So I think we asked for Leanne and Dana to maybe give us a little more discussion around your questions and where you wanted us to go. And then we will pull up our notes from the June meeting and look at those.

Dr. (Dana Cove): Hi, Liz, this is Dana. Are you ready for me to go over to my overview then?

Liz Wagstrom: We sure are. Thank you.

Dr. (Dana Cove): Okay, great. Hopefully, you've all received the implementation plan document, the draft document that I'm going to summarize just briefly today and get back to what Liz was mentioning about the questions that we have for you.

So we had questions, we presented some questions, as I mentioned before, on some earlier discussions or meetings of this group. But we were in the process of developing and thinking through and developing our actual implementation plan and veterinary services.

So we have since the last meeting, documented or developed this draft implementation plan where we've outlined our processes and activities that we anticipate implementing or are implementing to meet our goals for undertaking global awareness assessment of possible emerging animal diseases.

And detecting them, characterizing them, communicating our findings and keeping stakeholders informed and working collaboratively with them. And also, of course, with the goal of responding quickly to minimize the impact of emerging animal health issues or diseases.

So just briefly to walk you through our implementation planning and get to the question part, one thing - we've done several things here that are a little bit different from the framework document that was put out in 2014.

The first of which is we provided more clarity on the emerging disease case definition than what was initially included. And I know that we brought questions to this group specifically around how to clarify the emerging disease case definition for the purpose of: one, asking for industry and stakeholder communications around this or reporting around what an emerging disease might be, and also for our purposes and veterinary services, for sort of defining it internally.

And one, being consistent with the OIE definition. So that we are approaching emerging diseases and reporting them under OIE requirements accurately or in the right way. And also to actually sand it and provide more clarity for our own response activities here in the United States.

So on Page six, just referring back to the implementation plan, you'll see that we have a little bit different emerging disease definition than as I said was initially included in the framework document of 2014.

Again, with the idea of being more specific so that there's a better, more clarity with regard to what we would like reported or communicated to us. What we're communicating and looking for within and outside VS and what we plan to respond to in our own agency. So that's Page six.

You'll see we have three different sort of categories here. We have an unknown agent. We have a newly identified agent. And then a previously identified or known pathogen that has a change in epidemiology.

All these are consistent with the more broad definitions in the framework document. But again, are more specific. So we seek feedback. Again, that was one of our original questions is how can we clarify this emerging disease definition. We talked about it in one and that sort of thing.

So the devil is in the detail, as they say. If you look at this definition and run it through some scenarios, that's what we did as a cross unit VS working group is we tried to use ace our development of this plan on specific scenarios of emerging disease. If you run those definitions through some scenarios, does it work? Are we getting the data and the information that we need for characterizing and responding.

So the other part, I wanted to highlight as part of the implementation plan to this group. I'm assuming you probably haven't had a lot of time to read it in detail at this point, is that we provided the Roles and Responsibilities Overview starting in Chapter Two on Page seven and eight.

And so we have outlined processes there again for achieving the goals for providing global awareness and assessment and also early identification detection outlining the roles and responsibilities for that, and also characterizing each potential emerging animal health issue by risk level.

So if you skip on down to Appendix A, which is Page 15, it's not numbered, we have guidance for assigning each disease to a risk level. And you'll see we sort of divided this up to characterize risks that are not here in the United States. To our knowledge our global or international in nature we're tracking these. And so we assign each of these depending on their host range passage ethnicity and geographic range to one of three risk levels; nominal risk, potential risk or impending risk.

And then of course domestic diseases. Any potential emerging disease identified in the U.S. can be assigned to four different risk levels. And the first three are the same; nominal, potential and pending. And then a current, a fourth level which is current risk.

So the Roles and Responsibility Section outlines that using this early – this is a guidance for a preliminary risk level assignment. Just for early characterization of potentially emerging animal health issues that were monitoring or initially identifying. And that's primarily the responsibility of the risk identification team, as well as for domestic issues.

Our colleagues across veterinary services and points of contact across veterinary services working with the risk identification team to sort of monitor and assess each risk and assignment to a risk level.

And then based on that risk level and those characterizations, then anything that reaches any animal health threat reaching a level three, an international animal health threat, reaching a level three. Or that the Risk Identification Team and their points of contact don't feel they have enough information to really do an adequate risk characterization, will be communicated to veterinary services directors for additional input.

So we provided an Appendix B which is the very last two Pages of the document, sort of an outline of the processes. Highlighting the roles and responsibilities that we are proposing to undertake, and are already sort of implementing. We are not trying to sort of reinvent the wheel, if you will, but trying to take what we have already identified as processes in our assessment and activities, determining an appropriate response activity and documenting them.

And then adding to them sort of a process, a standard process for communication of these emerging animal health issues from first at the Risk Identification Team assigning the risk level and then raising this if anything that needs a designated risk level, to the attention of the veterinary services directors who would then provide an initial review of the information on any emerging disease, either international or domestic.

And determine whether there's enough information, whether there's more information that needs to be needed. Whether there's a need for additional activities, depending on the threat level of the issue.

And then depending on that will decide whether an actual team needs to be put together, an emerging disease team needs to be put together for conducting an analysis and determining what additional steps, either collection of additional information via more research, via contacting other stakeholders or international services for more information and that sort of thing, and then providing recommendations back to what needs to be done.

And then the final part, this is just the cliff notes of the plan. The final part is the response options. And again, response options are geared toward the risk levels of each emerging animal health issue.

So given a risk level one, for example, if you look at part three International Diseases at Risk Level One, which would be designated a nominal risk, we're just going to provide continual monitoring, incident and situational awareness updates as needed.

And then as the risk level assigned to a specific agent is higher, then those activities start to expand beyond just monitoring but to assessing preparedness status and then working again as the threat level increases working beyond veterinary services with other personnel in relevant countries.

And again determining whether we need to get isolettes or other information doing pathways assessment and that sort of thing so that we can be better prepared and hopefully prevent introduction of any global agent into our country.

And then if you look at the last Page, we have a similar set-up for the domestic diseases where we have a set of response options peered from risk level one on up to risk level four in options.

So one thing I want to highlight here is that when it comes to our goal here was to sort of design a flexible and dynamic approach, outlining specific activities and processes, sort of institutionalizing them, if you will. But not developing a specific response plan. Because as we all know, emerging diseases are very dynamic by way of their epidemiology, the species affected, the way they may be introduced, the way they may be spread and that sort of thing.

So developing a specific response plan really wasn't an option. It's more about developing a plan that's fluid and dynamic and outline response options based on the threat itself.

So I guess getting back to your original question, Liz, about what we're asking for. So initially, as I said, and we still are asking for input on this emerging disease case definition. There's been a lot of discussion internally about this. And as we have been sort of exercising, if you will, this plan internally and going through these processes to categorize specific agents that we're monitoring.

And tracking two different risk levels, and then start to have these conversations about what, if anything, do we need to do and that sort of thing. This definition is critical to sort of that process to one triggering the conversation and that sort of thing, and then outlining options accordingly. So we still seek input on the clarity and the usefulness of this definition.

Also the roles and responsibilities, we recognize that we have a big role here and have really focused on the role of veterinary services in our emerging disease detection and response activities. But it's really a partnership with state, and industry and other agencies and other federal partners.

So we seek input on the world that we've outlined and the processes there as far as roles for communicating and collaborating between veterinary services and our partners in working with them to communicate emerging disease issues and then helping to outline response activities and developing these responses.

So with that, I guess I'll turn it over to Leanne to add her perspective as far as - I lead the Risk Identification Team and Risk Assessment Group, so really responsible for that early characterization based on the emerging disease definition and that sort of thing and assigning the threat levels.

But Leanne, of course, is more on the response and communication side of it, so we have a great partnership here and I'll turn it over to her to add anything on the response side because I haven't really touched that very much.

(Leanne): So just a few comments to add to what Dana had said, is that one of the things, as we've tried to work through some scenarios that we're finding really difficult is that where we set the bar.

And what I mean by that is that Dana and her group receives a report, and it may be what we refer to as an N-of-one. You've got one scenario and it's a report of a - it could be identification of a new virus. It could be different morbidity mortality.

But when you start talking about an N-of-one and particularly when you increase the breadth of the information that you're getting, is tan N-of-one for all animal diseases going to actually overload the system?

So I think as you go through and really your comments would be very much appreciated, is that for you and your role, what would you like to see via go

through the process that Dana described. Because ironically earlier Jack Shear talking about our resources are limited. And while we would strive for an N-of-one, how do you see an N-of-one working?

And I think just again to echo what Dana has said, and that this obviously is not a plan that is specific for any one commodity, it's all commodity. But what we're really focusing on here is the process, and while it's the last chapter, if you will, and the paper is communication.

And throughout this process, it is our intent that it would be an inane process back and forth. It's not that suddenly we're going to come to – I'll pick a commodity that hasn't had an emerging disease yet that we've taken formal action on aquaculture, so this one's for you. Is that we're not going to, if there is an aquatic pathogen that is affecting our delamanid industry, we're going to be having outreach as we evaluate that issue as we talk about options.

It's not going to be a surprise that oh by the way, we're putting a Federal order in place. So I just want to insure everybody is that we do intend, as part of the process, very much to be communicative and transparent with our actions.

Man: What did you...

(Leanne): Aquaculture

Man: After that.

(Leanne): Delamanid.

Man: Delamanid,

Liz Wagstrom: I thought you were being facetious.

Woman: Can I ask a question? The emerging disease definition is broad. But the authorities specifically talks about livestock diseases. And I assume by livestock that would include like food production and agriculture. So while the definition is broad, this document isn't really talking about the USDA responding to wildlife diseases or companion animal diseases, or diseases of companion animals related to public health.

Liz Wagstrom: Bazinga. No you make a really good point. We've actually had discussions around that. Let me take the one item that you mentioned would be wild life.

In the situation where wild life would be impacting our domestic livestock is that yes, we would do an evaluation and work to see what our options were. In the ram of zoonotics in dogs and cats, we actually have had several discussions on that. And where we are with that is that in the event of cats seem to be picked on today.

But say cats were determined to be the significant carrier of a livestock pathogens and it was zoonotic is that the feeling is given the one health, if you will, mandate that we have, that there would be some sort of evaluation. Would we undertake the regulating of dogs and cats? That's beyond my pay grade. My own bias is no, but we would be working closely with the ADMA and other agencies to work with the zoonotic small animal disease issue.

And so getting back to your point and I thought we had corrected that slight conflict that you mentioned, but we need to go back and look at that because we are intentionally being vague so we're covering a broad spectrum as possible given the unknown scenarios that we face for any emerging diseases.

Let me answer your question another way about dogs and cats. If it's just an issue associated with dogs and cats zoonotic, no, I think that's going to be – I can assure you its going to be a much lower priority.

Man: So, Leanne, under the goals of Number One, it looks like it's even broader than what Belinda mentioned. That it says, Preparedness for animal diseases or pathogens. So are we to assume that's animal pathogens?

Because if it's just pathogens, there may be a public felt significance. That doesn't really sound like an AVIS issue, unless it's somehow associated with animals. Or should it be animal pathogens or just pathogens?

(Leanne): The reason why I thought we had struck pathogens out and focused on diseases, so that may be just an error in our proofreading of that. Dana, are you still on?

Dr. (Dana Cove): Yes, I am and I'm looking for the Page that you're talking about.

(Leanne): Yes, Page 5.1.

Dr. (Dana Cove): Page 5. Oh, I see, animal disease or pathogens in one. So, yes, I mean we could clarify that. As Leanne said, we had a lot of discussion around our scope of activities and how to define these things specifically.

Whether we were talking about animal diseases, whether we're talking about pathogens and that sort of thing. And so we had initially had pathogens in here quite a bit, because when it comes to laboratory reporting and that sort of thing, we think of it in terms of isolettes and pathogens.

And so we sort of had that kind of laboratory slant, if you will, and then backed up when we started talking about actual response activities, and how we're defining animal health issues that we would be responding to. We started backing up into the terminology animal diseases.

So that pathogens statement, I think I'll just say on the other side, in defense, if you will, of leaving it there is that often times on the risk identification side of it, when you're talking about global issues, there may be pathogens that - well I'll just pick on Zika virus for now. There may be pathogens that don't seem to have any animal health impact. But the information isn't there. And there's a lot of interest in it. A lot of interest in the reservoirs.

And Ebola is another good example, where we might be interested and we do, as a team, in the Risk Identification Team, go ahead and do undertake global awareness assessment of these emerging pathogens that may not have a clear animal health component, but there's a lot of interest in that, a lot of research around it.

And so we feel like we can't just ignore it and just say, oh we're going to wait until there's a clear established animal disease. We may not respond to it, it may just be sitting there in the nominal risk to animal health category, but we continue to monitor it and have global awareness of it because we understand that there's interest.

Is Ebola transmittable to pigs, for example. And Zika virus transmittal to any of our livestock species or similar species we might be interested in or might represent an animal health issue.

So in that particular case, I think that's why pathogens stayed in there, because it's in that global awareness and detection, global awareness and assessment piece.

Liz Wagstrom: Thanks, Dana. I pulled up our notes that we started on the June conference call, and I think we had three questions you had asked, maybe only two questions. Yes, three or four questions you asked last time.

One which was question number one, I think really focuses in again on case definitions. But we had a question two that talked about the criteria that should be considered when developing a response. And I believe there was 13 criteria. And then we had very strongly suggested that we also needed to consider contagiousness. That that wasn't covered by the 13 criteria listed. It appears the 13 criteria may be are no longer involved in the plan.

But I think that the committee felt that one of the criteria that needed to be considered was not only the economic and the other criteria listed that contagiousness was one that needed to be considered. So I don't know if we need further discussion on that, Leanne, or Dana. Or whether those criteria are kind of somewhere in a different process that they are going through.

Dr. (Dana Cove): That's a good point, Liz. Thank you. So you're right. We came forward before and we had those 13 criteria that were developed in the framework document of 2014. And you don't see that in this document. And we have not dropped the 13 criteria. It's just that this matrix that we have provided in the Appendix A and that we're using for preliminary assessment is just based on the variables that we are focused on with regard to the preliminary assessment of risk level.

So this is just based on this preliminary risk level assessment. We raise it to the next level of okay, should we be talking about this more broadly across veterinary services. And at that point, we bring in the other criteria, the 13 other criteria.

So if you're looking at Appendix B in the Processes, there's Part One, Receipt and Initial Evaluation of Information, it's at that green box, if you will, Disease Assigned Risk Level. Then you go to the green box for international diseases, et cetera.

We collaborate with VS liaisons, who are the directors. That is where we start to bring in all those other criteria. But you're right we haven't outlined that specifically, so it seems to be missing.

And the transmissibility, we ended up sort of embedding that a little bit in our thinking anyway, as far as when we're assigning disease and risk levels. We think about it in the geographic range and pathogenicity and it sort of figures in there as far as transmission pathways were spread and that sort of thing. But you're right, we could spell that out a little bit more specifically, that's the word I'm looking for.

Liz Wagstrom: Great. Good. Well, we'll try to capture that in notes we send forward that will say as you get into that point where you consider criteria. Well we had two points there. One is you needed to suggest or consider contagiousness or transmissibility, but also that we felt they needed to be considered in a process that engaged all impacted stakeholders.

So I think we'll wordsmith a little bit, but just to make sure that that's what you're still looking for. Question one, which you gave us last time, really looked at developing whether there is a threshold to consider a disease

emerging, which I think in some ways could fit into your case definition. Whether it's a threshold or whether this is just what makes your case definition. So we had some definitions that I think may be – now, Dana, can you see the screen from SIA or not?

Dr. (Dana Cove): Sorry, no. I wasn't able to log onto the Ag Connect part this morning.

Liz Wagstrom: Okay. Yes, we'll just forward you the email with these notes on them. And it'll take just a second here. In the meantime everybody can check their iPhones and stuff.

(Leanne): While we're pausing for a moment for IP issues, were there any of the public here that were going to want to comment this afternoon? If so, if you'd please let me know before lunch.

Liz Wagstrom: Maybe while she is doing that, your question about your N question, I appreciate it. And then also I think someone mentioned it's pretty broad. Does it mean does it affect food producing animals, or is it dogs, cats or both?

(Leanne): Could you or have you thought about rather than having an absolute answer to that, say these horses will be prioritized based on the number of cases seen and its impact. Or is it just since a live self (unintelligible) animal so that if you just don't have the resources to get to those, one specie, two species, you just don't get to them. So that it's not that they're not important or not significant, it's just that you prioritize them rather than take off them.

Liz Wagstrom: I guess my question wasn't specifically about whether we got to them. But specifically under the authority one-point-five in this document, it specifically says under the Authority, it only mentions livestock diseases. So why is the definition for emerging diseases in the document include wildlife and public

health? In the one-point-five under Authority it only says livestock. So that was what I was questioning is the difference there.

(Leanne): They are two separate issues. It's a real a good point.

Liz Wagstrom: So and that's your point about prioritizing. I think that's a good suggestion and something that we've got to consider. Because as we walk through the process and we're standing it up in regards to this documentation on some of these issues that Dana and her group has run through, and the (unintelligible) have been involved and S and E, is that how do we actually come to an end point. An end point being okay, it's going to go on the watch list.

Or no, we're going to make a recommendation that we need to do x, y, and z and that's a resource to (unintelligible) because we don't necessarily want to be, or I don't want to be in a situation where everything is the least worked made that you're pushing up.

So we're struggling with that. And so I think if there is a way that we can prioritize and verbally communicate that prioritization and the rationale behind it. I think that's a better way to go than just saying low man on the totem pole, you're off.

Dana, have you received the email with the document?

Dr. (Dana Cove): Yes, I'm on. I can see it.

Liz Wagstrom: Great. Excellent. So for my June conference call if you looked at question one, we're thinking more of a threshold because we also had the discussion about is N equals one emerging is something you find in a laboratory sample,

but you looked at the whole genome of something, is that truly a disease of a pathogen?.

So these are what we came up with in our June conference call. One was in the spirit of one health. You obtained consistencies for emerging diseases as CDC and WHL. Now I don't remember if we assigned somebody to actually go get those definitions, but I believe they were easily available on the web to look at those emerging disease definitions.

And I think that's something as this committee working with AVIS, we look those up together or whether we can say the agency should take a look at those.

Man: (Unintelligible) definitions consist of.

Liz Wagstrom: Yes, okay. And then the next one was we actually developed some criteria which I think is right there with your case. I'm trying to type and talk at the same time.

Dr. (Dana Cove): Yes, we did look at the emerging diseases definitions at CDC and in reality they were a bit more – we wanted to be a little more specific in our definitions.

I mean, they were similar to sort of the LIE or at the level of specificity anyway of OIE or our original sort of definitions used in the framework. And we were thinking along the lines of yes, we need to make sure that we are consistent with those.

But we wanted a little bit more information to address some of those following bullets that are more specific to both our authority and our need for

defining thresholds, and the need to define the difference between what you referred to; finding an agent versus finding an agent associated with disease.

Liz Wagstrom: Great. So just for those others who are on the phone that may be listening in that can't see the documents from the public, so we did say the committee considered that the following criteria should be met to be considered an emerging disease.

First we would need to rule out a foreign animal disease with a controlled program. So whether it's hoof and mouth disease, or exotic Newcastle, or one of those controlled programs for animal diseases, it needs to be associated with a disease and a disease syndrome.

Finding of an agent that is not associated with the disease should not be reportable or considered an emerging animal disease. And the force would be not known to exist in the United States. If it's a new strain of a known disease, evidence of a change in epidemiology or zoonotic potential. So those were minimum criteria.

And we did realize that triggers for considering an emerging disease are situation dependent. We also have some grammar to fix in that sentence. And include that we have mortality and morbidity that are alarming, especially in multiple premises. Unexpected increases in mortality and morbidity over previously defined as a disease causing agent.

And again, I think what we meant there is that if we know that there's a range of expected morbidity or mortality from a disease agent that an unexpected increase in that range would be one of the triggers. And then other epidemiological patterns with protection impacts which are unexpected.

So if it would be helpful, and I'll ask Leanne and Dana, we can further wordsmith this to clarify what we meant if that would be helpful in your case of definition discussion in the document.

(Leanne): I'm just glancing at that and glancing at this chart. It looks like a lot of what we've talked about has gotten in here, and I wonder from you, the VS perspective is, would it be more helpful if we sort of went back, took maybe overnight, we all look back at these recommendations and take the time to redo this?

Because I still haven't in fact, I haven't looked at this before we got here today because when we got it. And come back and refine this more, rather than sending recommendations, that we did most of discussions of this in January, and I'm thinking some of it at least is there.

Liz Wagstrom: And actually since the document has been developed and is entering its infancy perhaps, I think to get your comments on this rather than the initial comments would be great and much appreciated.

((Crosstalk))

Man: The definition is on Page six of this document, and is it our goal to rework this or I don't understand it. What are we doing right now? This definition to me sounds pretty good.

Liz Wagstrom: Yes, and I think that's what we're trying to look at is that what we were doing back in January and June is probably maybe a moot point based on what's in here.

So I think the suggestion may be that we go back and actually spend some time this evening looking this over, seeing if we have, if the committee would like to provide further input or edit too not only the definition, but also the head officer suggested that we also look at the roles and responsibilities that are outlined in here and give an input on the roles and responsibilities that are outlined in here.

Man: Okay that helps because I didn't mean that as good what we did, but it doesn't seem like it's even necessary now based on what I have read here. I did read this document before we came. And I thought this definition was pretty good, but obviously some others may not feel the same way. But I'm just trying to understand what we were going through here.

Liz Wagstrom: No, I think that was the trying to figure out again what we did previously have any meaning? Was it still consistent or needed to be worked on versus do we now have a new assignment. And it appears we've got a new assignment.

(Leanne): So could it be possible to email what we did do to everybody so that we can also sort of glance and compare tonight.

Man: So, Liz, for the committee's sake, could Dana and Leanne just reiterate the things they'd like us to maybe focus on? Because I heard several things, definitions, roles and responsibilities, but there might have been a couple of other things that they really wanted us to focus on. That's our overnight task homework.

Liz Wagstrom: He has specific questions.

(Leanne): So, Dana, do you want to start?

Dr. (Dana Cove): Yes, the definitions I think is key. I mean, did we hit the target based on our previous conversations and that sort of thing, and other issues that have arisen here? Does the case definition meet that?

And then along those lines, going back to the original question about triggers, we have defined some triggers here, but as Liz has pointed out, we may not have included – I mean, again, this guidance document, Appendix A specifically, is used for preliminary assessment. So the trigger here is this is used to establish that first trigger in Appendix B that part one.

You know when something raises to the level for broader reread director and veterinary services director's input and consideration, have we met the need there as far as your input and your thinking around triggers?

The one thing looking at Liz scrolling through this that we brought to this committee and we haven't really addressed, I don't think at all really, in this document. That we'd still like feedback on is that question of okay, well we have this document that outlines processes for detecting and characterizing emerging diseases and responding to them, but we don't really outline that fourth question about okay when does something become endemic?

And is there some sort of – we have a tiered approach for all our activities based on the threat level and emerging, but we don't really have any sort of - and then this is the process for determining endemicity.

And I don't know. In my mind I could see that maybe that goes beyond the scope, but then on the other hand I would, I think we still have that question outstanding as far as when it falls off and becomes endemic. We haven't addressed that, in other words, directly in this plan.

Liz Wagstrom: And two other items, not to make your homework plate overwhelming. On Page eight, we have Roles and Responsibilities Overview, and I think if you can go through and look at the respective sections that you may fit in, is to provide feedback to make sure that we've captured the main items.

And then on the last, on Chapter Four Communication, again although we're starting with, we don't start with communication, it's just to make sure that you're comfortable with what we have written here about communication.

And that's on Page 13. It talks about some documents that were used, but if you have feedback from any of the other communications or documents that VS is providing on animal health issues, certainly if you think webinars are the next best thing to sliced bread, that's great. Or webinars, hate them, get rid of them. But anyway what we're just looking at is effective ways that we can communicate with you. And we certainly, we want to make this inclusive.

Man: Can I ask a question about the scope again? We've already discussed this a little bit, but it's not clear to me.

There's the authority that AVIS has over livestock diseases, but the language in this document also talks about agents with public health significance. So this problem has come out in the past, E.coli 1-5-7 or as (unintelligible) organisms fell into this area of a gray zone of their infections of cattle but don't cause disease in cattle and so who has the authority to investigate these or to even approve vaccines?

So what are we talking about here when we're talking about emerging diseases?

(Leanne): Correct. Primarily animal diseases. And I don't know if I should go here, but I'm going to jump in to the deep end of the pool.

So on the Animal Health Protection Act is the definition of 'animal' is extremely broad. The only thing it excludes are nonhuman primates, I believe. So it's extremely broad. But then it talks about those – what it's really getting at is any animal that is able to impact livestock and domestic animal health, livestock production is typically how we interpret this.

So now I'm going off the record. This is a one-five-seven, and actually since you bought it up, I used to be responsible for the largest fecal bank looking for a one-five-seven in dairy cattle.

But as you pointed out, it's not a disease. It's not viewed as a disease of livestock. And I think our role here, and certainly Beth Lockner who is Dana's supervisor. My supervisor is not here. Is a strictly food born disease issue, which is really what a 15787 is primarily. That would not be something that we would undertake under the emerging diseases framework. It would be different if it were killing cattle, than we would be. That's my definition.

And, Beth, I don't know if you want to weigh in on that?

(Beth Lockner): I think that's right. The animal definition is very broad, really everything except humans with regard to the animal health protection act.

But then there's additional points where there's some clarifications in the Animal Health Protection Act where livestock is used as well.

I do think that we are trying in this document, as well as the National Risk of Airborne Diseases really is we still referring more to livestock, but I think we

are trying to leave, as you said earlier, the door open if there is a situation where it makes sense for us to be involved and that there's support for us to be involved on the animal side.

And again, I agree with Leanne's comment, if it's related to other animals that are putting livestock at risk, we would be very interested in that. And I think we have worked out before with HHS, when we had the monkey pox in this country, HHS stepped into some of those types of situations as well.

So it is an area that sometimes is gray and we sit and look at whose best to deal with that situation. And it may be if there's interest with this committee there could be some presentation at some point, more with regard to the Animal Health Protection Act and how we interpret the Animal Health Protection Act.

Liz Wagstrom: Thanks. It appears we've probably come to a pretty good spot to maybe do a lunch break. I won't expect you to all read this over lunch, we'll wait till tomorrow to talk more. We do have the public comments at 1:15. I do believe we are supposed to continue our discussion on Comprehensive Surveillance. And I don't know if we will have another presentation on that, or whether we're just to continue our discussion.

Okay, so we'll finish that discussion after lunch. So we will pull up those slides, pull up our notes from the June conference call on Comprehensive Surveillance.

So I'll turn it over to Diane to tell us what we're doing when we're coming back, where we're going.

Diane Sutton: First regarding lunch. Those members of the committee who would like to, as well as our AVIS speakers, we have reserved spaces in the secretary's dining room. For members of the public who aren't aware, there is a public cafeteria in the South Building across the street. I believe there's a small café in this building.

Rosalyn, who's our meeting organizer can assist you with directions if you don't know where those are located. Also, I'm going to let her give the directions on how to get to the Secretary's Dining Room.

In terms of after lunch agenda, we'll go ahead and wrap up what we're doing on the Comprehensive Integrated Surveillance and then Alan Huddleston will give a short presentation on stakeholder engagements and we'll collect your input on that. And then if there's any additional time left we'll work on any remaining outstanding items.

In the morning, our first presentation is going to be a little bit delayed because one of our speakers has another commitment, so the talk in the morning on the National Agricultural Biodefense Laboratory will be at ten o'clock exactly. So we can have that extra little bit of time in the morning to work on the emerging diseases framework document. And if we don't complete it then we'll just carry it on to the next session.

So I'll turn it over to Rosalyn to tell us where we're going.

Rosalyn Floyd: Hello, operator?

Coordinator: Yes, go ahead.

Rosalyn Floyd: We are going to break for lunch. Do you mind returning back in about an hour which would be 1300 hours.

Coordinator: Sure. I'll place parties on your deck until you reconvene.

Rosalyn Floyd: Thank you. Thank you.

(Leanne): So I'll go ahead and turn it over to (Liz Wexrum). I'm sorry I'm having an after lunch moment. We'll now go over the Comprehensive and Integrated Surveillance... Oh, thank you. Is there anyone here from the public that wishes to comment? We won't be taking any public comments then this afternoon.

So we'll be moving back over to Liz to guide us through the Comprehensive Integrated Surveillance portion. We also, please note, that Doctor Brian McCluskey is here to provide as our expert for any questions that the committee may have on this topic.

Liz Wagstrom: Great, thank you. And we asked Doctor McCluskey to come down to perhaps refresh our memory a little bit on what the agency had asked of us.

And I'm also looking at the language that we had put together in the June conference. I see we've got a few 'the agency should' so I think that provides us our first opportunity to look at our wording and our partnership around this.

So, Brian, I think that this first paragraph sums up what it was you did kind of asked about providing recommendations on how best to help all stakeholders understand the importance of robust data collection integration reporting to the ultimate realization of a comprehensive integrated animal health surveillance.

And then also support for the various data management assessments that are currently ongoing to find both short term and long term solutions to management of animal health data, and for us to provide suggestions on how the needs of external customers and stakeholders for animal health information, including how best to access the information, the frequency to be made available and the formats for reporting. So does that, is there anything else Brian, that you'd like to sum up or ask specifically?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: No, Liz, I think that's still very much appropriate for where we are in our process and the needs that are identified in that paragraph that we sent forward before I think are still the same needs.

Certainly since I last had a chance to visit with you all, I think it was in Dallas, we have made some progress on some of these areas. But definitely these are still the big pieces that still need to be worked on, and we definitely want to find those partnerships with both the industry and other stakeholders in making that happen.

Liz Wagstrom: And I realize it's been since about eight or nine months since we had Brian's presentation, so we may have not had it top of mind as we start this discussion, but I think we'll keep you here as a resource, if we could. What the current capabilities are, if we still have questions.

The recommendations we started out with – and I think maybe what I'll do is see if I can put a Page break here and see if we can get this all on one Page for you.

So here's our first. We recommend USDA, access resources necessary to bring the full network of animal health laboratories and the capability to

electronic message and share data. With a sub point we talked about having resources to be electronically generated and thus reach the full complimented test results using the standardized logical observation identify names and codes or like, at an HL-seven message structure that are consistent with the norm in USDA schema.

And somebody a lot smarter on computers than I knows what that actually means and the language, but it is that messaging format that would be secure. And then we're also talking about prioritizing surveillance activities using a risk assessment and a risk management process.

And then we also – I think this is where we kind of got stuck a little bit in our discussion is how you tie NL Rad into the comprehensive and creative surveillance and how to make those reports available.

And then we also wanted to recommend that USDA institutes that all reporting systems report across systems. As an example, anything that would be reported into the Emergency Management EMA systems would then notify those who require the knowledge from the State Federal Tribal or Plum Island. And try to improve the usability of that. And I think we were wordsmithing that I think probably when we ran out of time. I know we now have some interest in that.

And then the question I think was brought up that we did not necessarily have a lot of input from the committee yet, how best to gain access to surveillance streams that are outside of the data within the, especially the nondialogue, the diagnostic labs already.

So I think with that maybe what we should do is go back to the top with the first and talk about, just start from the top down and see if we still are happy

with what we've written, if we need to wordsmith, if we've missed things we need to add. But as far as looking at the resources necessary to be able to electronic message and share data, I think that we were challenged by Doctor Shear this morning to say what can USDA bring to the table? But then what can we, whether it's industry, state, academic institutions, whatever, what else can we as a partnership bring to the table on those capabilities?

And so I think that this might be a great place to open it up to say is this something that is a USDA centric activity or should we try to wordsmith this or look at what can everybody bring to the table? And so I know we've got some diagnosticians around the table here that would probably have firsthand knowledge, as well as I see animal health officials. I think maybe I'm going to point at you first off and say if you've got questions or suggestions.

Woman: I have one question and that is just that I get the sense from the question that you feel there's a lack of understanding on the part of some they call the czar the public on the need for this. And are you asking for ways to educate also outside of the USDA? The USDA's collection of data? Are you really looking at better ways to collect data and better ways to use that data? What is it all about?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Well – this is Brian McCluskey. No, I don't think what was implied here was the need to have others understand the importance of this, because I'm pretty sure anybody that recognizes the value of diagnostic laboratory data and how that fits in surveillance would understand that this kind of standardized messaging and doing it electronically versus sending a spreadsheet is the way to go.

And I think that's been demonstrated just in the last few years with some of our outbreaks. And the real value of this rapid messaging of laboratory

diagnostics and then linking that to field data. So I don't think that's part of it. I think what we're really asking for here is to continue to leverage it, and continue to make progress on it. And I think that is happening. Of course, we have been receiving recommendations from industry partners to make this happen faster, to make this happen in a more robust way.

And so I think that's why we came back to this committee and said, okay now we could really use your help in helping us get there. Does that make sense? And maybe I could just add, I mean the idea that we would be working with industry partners on this has happened now with a very great example of a combined effort with an industry in the USDA on advancing HL-seven messaging from diagnostic labs. So I think we're getting there slowly. It's pretty complex so it's going to take a little time. But we just want to make sure that it stays on the front burner I guess is all we're asking for there.

Liz Wagstrom: Is the current language around this first bullet point cover what we wanted or bring it into mind the fact that you're talking about those partnerships. Do we want to not only talk about assessing resources, but reaching out to whether it's industries, diagnostic labs, states, universities to help implement that?

Is that something we need to bring that thought process into this first recommendation. I don't why I keep turning blue there. It keeps turning blue there. It's like my cord is, I've been messing with it.

Rosalyn Floyd: That didn't work.

((Crosstalk))

Rosalyn Floyd: ... worst.

((Crosstalk))

Rosalyn Floyd: Now Number 1 when I put in the Page break one way and it became two. Yes.
You do this...

((Crosstalk))

Dr. Brian McCluskey: So Dr. (Wagstrom) I would say - this is Brian McCluskey again. I would say that you - I know Dr. (Sher) doesn't necessarily is (unintelligible) with that recommends word. But the recommends word here we already seen this recommendation and we've actually addressed it in the - since that list, and that we have provided additional funding toward building HL7 messaging.

And that was - again in that partnership - with an industry group. So we're working on that.

Rosalyn Floyd: And we continue to.

((Crosstalk))

Rosalyn Floyd: ...use.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Absolutely. Well I'm not sure the industry necessarily would like up to hear that we're leveraging them, but we're working with them.

Man: I don't (unintelligible).

Rosalyn Floyd: And I think we kind of got to there as the Point Number 5 where it was how to gain access to those (unintelligible) streams of data outside of those within the

(unintelligible). And that was an open-ended question that we hadn't started talking about, which I think is a huge potential resource for great data.

Yes. Exactly.

(Unintelligible) would it be wise to say what is the - what are the, you know, criteria or bunch of things that would be a positive points in getting those? So it would be - and I don't know - it's hard to be producer confidentiality when you are trying to do surveillance. But is there some sort of...

Woman: But once you're getting (unintelligible) but the...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Go on the internet and find (unintelligible). I'm sorry I should be using the microphone. You can go on the internet and find old USDA reports of like slaughter house condemnations in the various species.

Or a particular pathogens that are found in certain (unintelligible) or whatever. And the industries use those reports to help (unintelligible) help to these control efforts. And you would hate to see those reports disappear.

Rosalyn Floyd: Yes.

Woman: Part of this question is, you know, how - are those report - what reports are needed? How often should they be released? Those are all really important and have nothing to do with the diagnostic (unintelligible).

Dr. Brian McCluskey: So, Liz, I can speak to some of the data that you're specifically referencing there and in condemnation data. So we actually are using that data

from that (unintelligible) almost in a more syndromic surveillance fashion, and have been doing so for some time, and doing that consistently.

Specifically - at least for now - it's been focused mostly on swine and cattle, but we have been doing that monitoring for a number of years and using that to sort of see what's happening in the slaughter houses.

And then particularly for the swine industry it's linked that back to some sentinel practices that the industry has put together to say, we've seen this - these condemnations - increasing in this particular catchment area. Are you guys seeing anything in the field that would indicate that there's a problem?

So that's happening. I won't say it's necessarily as robust as it could be - the data collection part of that - because we're getting that in - that data from FSIS I think is pretty good.

Of course the application of it and the implementation of it and then the expansion of it is something that we're certainly interested in doing. But specific to the slaughter house piece for cattle and for swine I think we're in good shape.

Actually poultry may be not as much and maybe some of them are minor species.

Woman: So, Brian, one of the question I have, and I, you know, wouldn't give you much disease data, but it would definitely look at animal movement data is certificates of veterinarian inspection for interstate...

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Okay.

Woman: ...movement of animals. Is the USDA have - I mean my feeling is a lot of those fit in filing cabinets (unintelligible) veterinarian's offices and don't really get utilized as (unintelligible) as they might be able to. Is that the - is that a wrong impression?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Well we've - I wouldn't say it's a wrong impression. So we have initiated - research - more research-type studies around certificates of veterinarian inspection that allow us to look at developing a nationwide look at the network of cattle movements for instance. And that was done by looking at 15,000, you know, paper records that we acquired from state veterinarian's offices across the country.

So obviously we're not going to be doing that on a routine basis for surveillance purposes. So the electronic part of the (CBI)s becomes critical in being able to do that.

We were just - of an exercise in Texas that was looking at electronic certificates of veterinarian inspection and how they might be used in an outbreak response, and really helping to understand those movements. Again these were swine movements, but movements in general.

And it's obvious that if we're going to use - or look at movements that's really - as a way to do surveillance or help us understand how to respond. That's really only going to happen if we get electronic records or somebody gets electronic records and then either shares that with us or we work with the state or work with the industry on understanding what those movements actually mean for disease spread and disease control. It's only going to work if they're electronic. It can't be paper, because it's just too (unintelligible).

And there's - as you just indicated - boxes and boxes and filing cabinets for all of those paper records that really make any kind of a data collection pretty onerous.

Dr. (Reed): There's also a lot of diagnostic testing that's been - being done by a private diagnostic lab and also industry laboratories - any way of ever capturing any of that?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: That's a great question, Dr. (Reed). Now I think what we're anticipating with the national report of animal diseases is those. I think we'll get a little bit better handle on what's happening in those laboratories on the reportable disease standpoint.

Getting information in a consistent way for maybe negatives - of course which is part of what we need for surveillance as well - maybe not as likely, but certainly for the positives. I think that the national report of animal diseases will loop those folks in a lot.

Dr. (Reed): Yes.

Woman: From the different industry organizations is there data that would provide value within whether it's production systems? And I know we talked about the industry laboratories, but whether it's - yes.

Well I mean as an example in pig industry we all know if we have (unintelligible) that are (unintelligible) positive or whatever. We may not be doing a lot of testing or, you know, that testing may or may not be in the (unintelligible).

I guess - first is there data that may be usable in those systems?

And secondly is there any way that it could be provided into a surveillance system without (unintelligible) getting to the other issues of whether it's liability or confidentiality or whatever?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Well, I know there wasn't necessarily a question directed at me. I'm not sure if you were - maybe you should say if you're directing at me, because I don't want to impose here.

But, you know, we have obviously diagnostic laboratory data as a big part of surveillance. And the other part is surveillance from an animal house perspective. There's some level of observational surveillance.

So - which is what industries do every day. They're in there looking at their animals and observing if there's clinical signs or drop in production, drop in water consumption, drop in feeding consumption. These are all observations that can help indicate, you know, if there is disease present.

And so collecting that kind of information along with the what - I guess we would typically call the epidemiological data that would be associated with that.

So - location to some level of granularity type of operation, size of operation. These are the kinds of things that, you know, we generally collect in surveillance systems to help us understand where diseases (unintelligible) and how best to prevent in the core control (unintelligible).

So I'm not sure that answered your question or not.

Man: So, Brian - so really what you're trying to do is aggregate all of this data that's - that people collect, right?

So if people are doing the AI surveillance for NPIP then that goes to an NPIP lab (unintelligible) in other words none of them would have them? They just reported all of that last week. (Unintelligible) how many states test they did? What kind of tests - all that jazz. So I would assume that you get that.

The sick animals are coming in the lab. You're getting that.

There's some testing done outside those channels, but not a lot probably. And it's going to be in a real fragmented kind of way. But you just want a - kind of a dumping ground for all of that stuff, right? That you have access to.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Well - so this is my favorite (unintelligible). Testing does not equal surveillance. We don't just necessarily want what the test results were for the - however many thousand NPIP tests were run (unintelligible) for (AI).

Yes helpful. But understanding what we were testing becomes really important.

What flocks - where those flocks were, you know, how frequently they're tested. All of that becomes part of that, (Don).

Man: Right.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: So...

Man: How about the wildlife's streams, like for the water (unintelligible) surveillance and things? Do you already get that now?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Yes we do. Yes. We...

Man: Or the stuff that John's team is doing maybe (unintelligible) I don't know, the wildlife (unintelligible)? Are they going to (unintelligible) if a state program's going on?

Dr. John Fischer: If the state program is funded by (Athus) map data all feeds into the system, but there is other - there's other data that could be lost or that's just (unintelligible) would be with state wildlife diagnostic (unintelligible) exempt that's going on or our regional cooperative.

And also I think there's pretty good integration where the National Wildlife Health Center U.S. Geological Survey, but U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does some health work and has kind of fragmented out there.

So, you know, we do a lot of Avian Influenza virus surveillance, but it's through a center of excellence. And I'm not sure how that information feeds into your system.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Well - right. So specific to Avian Influenza and the wildlife, the data that we have very good access to is - I think what Dr. (Fisher) was talking about - was (Athus) Wildlife Services efforts in doing that, 40,000 examples a year or something like that.

But there are a number of other efforts whether it's USGS, whether it's the work that (unintelligible) and so is that all dumped together and looked at in a sort of a whole listed comprehensive way for wildlife - I would say no.

But I think, you know, it's not that it's not in a summarized way shared. We see what they have. They see what we have. And I think together the experts would rely on the experts whether their (Athus) experts, Squidith experts, USGS experts - they kind of put their heads together and kind of interpret that. But it's not all in one place compiled for wildlife.

Woman: I know this might be FDA - which you're talking about trying to get everybody talking together I guess - but as we move into the veterinary feed direct and you start having all of this data filed as a vet writes a script for XYZ ranch for, you know, whatever Anaplasmosis for the - I mean is that data that's going to be brought into this

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Well yes. I think we would like to do that. We haven't quite figured out how to do that. And of course having that data is nice, but it needs to be linked into the outcomes of that, right?

So the reason we're doing that is to get a handle on antimicrobial use with the idea that getting handles on are using antimicrobials appropriately. We'll see reductions in antimicrobial resistance.

The piece that, you know, understanding what scripts are being written under the DFD is great. And FDA I'm assuming will have some way of collecting that. I think they will.

How we link that then to the outcomes - ultimately hoping that we see reductions - is the part that we do not necessarily have figured out yet.

Woman: So realistically that can't feed into the system at this point?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Well when you say system I'm not sure what...

Woman: Well, you're trying to get...

Dr. Brian McCluskey: We are talking about comprehensive integrated surveillance.

Woman: Right.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: And certainly antimicrobial resistance is going to be part of comprehensive integrated surveillance. It's probably a little distant yet on how that would best be collected. We're working again with the industry very closely and figuring out what those metrics might look like.

We have certainly some plans underway to look at how best to collect it. Don't have the resources yet to implement those plans, but we're hoping to see those in the next year.

Woman: Who's doing the increase slaughter house surveillance of antimicrobial resistance that was the source for the identification of the serious multi-drug resistance, bugs from swine that was reported recently? Is that USDA or is that FDA doing that?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Yes. It's USDA, FSIS. But it's part of the National Antimicrobial Resistant Monitoring System, NARMS, which is FDA, USDA, CDC.

Woman: So you would have access to that data to incorporate it into the system, yes?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Sure. So NARMS has been around for - I think they were - they're celebrating 10 years and I think I just read that. So - and that data is being collected and reported on - it's - it is surveillance. It's monitoring. So it's done probably not as robustly as we'd like to see for the purposes I think that we're

now envisioning , but it's there and it - we're already talking about expanding it.

Rosalyn Floyd: I see that we've got this list of, you know, a half a dozen or so streams and I'm pretty sure Brian's probably already thought of those streams before. So I think the question the FDA has asked us as a part of partnership are there ways we can suggest that they could gain access to some of those streams, those surveillance streams?

You know, so how - if we felt that those streams as data could contribute to our integrated surveillance for animal disease and antibiotic resistance are there ways to - we could - considering how (unintelligible) or that facilitate the FDA getting some of that data?

Well first of all I'm going to - and that I've got my two state (unintelligible) health officials over here that's (unintelligible). Maybe I'll ask about the certificates of veterinarian inspection.

Woman 3: I think that (unintelligible) I have (unintelligible).

Rosalyn Floyd: Oh okay.

((Crosstalk))

Rosalyn Floyd: Sure. (Unintelligible) saying is that we've got here this list of bullet points that are various data stream or surveillance streams. But what I think the FDA is asking us is how would - how could they substantiate getting access to those streams, which do we have any recommendations for how they - how we could facilitate some of that data coming into a comprehensive surveillance system?

Woman: I did just forward an email to Diane that came from the Western State Veterinarians and it's - it was a resolution that we passed at our last meeting a couple of months ago that does encourage - it's something that USDA is already moving for, but just like everything there's a demand for resources especially in the IT world. You can only move so fast.

But it is - suggests some of the points of that resolution with support, their ability to tap into a lot of information that's getting gathered at the state level including CBIs - just to continue the integration between their - to put it in laymen's terms - to continue the integration between our systems and the state systems. It's more spelled out specifically in that resolution.

Man: And there was a resolution for what meeting?

Woman: It was from the Western State Veterinarians - which I represent - that happened a couple of months ago.

Rosalyn Floyd: So I'll go ahead and I'll put it up on the screen.

Man: And I have a question.

So given what California is trying to do as a result of SB 27. What is that in essence be seeking to accomplish what this is looking at on a national level?

((Crosstalk))

Man: Meaning the similar groups would need to come together in the same (unintelligible).

Woman: Right. So what he's asking about SB 27 is short term for a legislation that was just passed for - that requires my department to take on some monitoring activities or (unintelligible) into antimicrobial resistance. So - and that legislation actually requires that we work with USDA and CDC and FDA on their surveillance systems.

So that might be - it's pretty unique and specific. Maybe not as relevant to the larger group, just as a side - from California's perspective - we won't be exchanging data related to that.

Man: I think that's the concept.

And going back to the question. Something that this nation has struggled with for a long time is we have the silos built out of the post-World War 2 era that really either need to be dissembled and put back together for 21st century or we find administrated ways to share data and combine efforts. Because the nation's health is at risk if we don't do that.

And so it probably sounds like a really high level question. It seems very low level in a (unintelligible) but the obviously might be there.

So it's CDC, USDA, FDA, EPA - all parties, all players - are committed through an interagency agreement to share such information and combine resources where appropriate, like, if we get there.

And I don't know any simpler way to do it then just agreeing that (unintelligible) the interest of the industry and public health. We - we've got to sit down in the same room and share that information.

Rosalyn Floyd: I needed to clarify the one reason we can do it and I think one of the biggest reasons we like our silos is because we have clear confidentiality protections for individuals in our legislation. So that enables us as does NARMS and (NARS). So that - the National Animal Health Monitoring System and the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (unintelligible). They all have confidentiality built into it.

So it's easier to gather data and then draw conclusions and share the conclusions. It's just like in the human health world, clearly confidentiality is protected and that allows for data exchange more - well, a little more readily.

So I think that's the key. If what you really want to get out is breaking down silos - there needs to be some pretty good protection.

Man: Yes.

Rosalyn Floyd: Which...

Man: I would agree.

Rosalyn Floyd: ...is not difficult. It's difficult to get in...

Man: I would totally agree. And I think that there is - there are ways to share such information that would be stripped of identifiers. At some level you need that within the silo probably.

Rosalyn Floyd: Right.

Man: That should combine this. I don't think identifiers should be a barrier. Just strip them up - strip those out.

Rosalyn Floyd: Yes.

Dr. John Fischer: This is something we've been dealing with on the wildlife side for a long time unfragmented, data that are out there. And efforts to centralize the collect it all into one system.

We don't have the confidentiality issues, because the animals are owned by you and me and the rest of the general public.

But we have data ownership issues, and publication issues. And who's going to interpret the data to what affect? And how well are they going to do that job of interpreting the data compared to how those who are actually in the field and design the systems would be able to interpret it?

And then ultimately what it comes down to is what is the value to me for providing my data to you? And it's a confidential issue.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Dr. (Fisher), your statement there at the very end I've heard Dr. (Jones) tell me a half a dozen times. So we're willing to share, but what you giving, you know - as a state Veterinarian, as a representing of state - what are you going to give us back?

And I think in the language in the very first bullet that Dr. (Waxton) went through we were talking about what are those reporting needs? What can we provide back of value by frequency, by format, by (unintelligible) and all those types of things.

And I can't (unintelligible) again since we met in Dallas. We are making will strides within (Athus) to make that reporting be much more friendly and much more meaningful to our partners.

And I think the reporting part actually becomes almost the easier aspect of that. It's getting the data that allows for accurate reporting in there that we're still - I will say struggling with, but it's still, you know, out there on the table.

The recommendations - the recommended actions that came out of (unintelligible) at Western State's Livestock Health Association meeting are really good recommendations in there essentially saying we've got some (unintelligible) systems that need to be linked - the MRS, SES, USAHerds - you know, all of these different systems for animal health surveillance. And the use of our mobile technology - that all needs to be linked in.

And there is no arguing with that what so ever. And a lot of that I think is just some IT muscle that needs to happen to make that work. It's not really policy at that point. It really is just some IT muscle to make it work.

Woman: You're playing with the cable. I kind of lost a little track of what the next discussion needs to be.

But here are the actions that were recommended and I think we could decide if we want to look at any of those that came out of - this is out of the Western Veterinarians. And some of them are very similar to what we had.

And so, (Annette Ogene), would you like to walk us through...

(Annette Ogene): Sure.

Woman: ...a little bit?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: And if you could explain all the abbreviations (unintelligible)...

Rosalyn Floyd: Yes. Exactly...

Dr. Brian McCluskey: ...some of those I'm lost.

Rosalyn Floyd: I was seeing that. And some of it's filled out up in the upper part. And I should have probably brought some hard copies, but I actually didn't think of it until we were sitting here a few minutes ago.

((Crosstalk))

Rosalyn Floyd: Oh yes. Sorry. So the first one is - someone already touched on it - creating a means for USDA databases to receive data following the United States Animal Health Association Certificate of Veterinarian Inspection (XML) data transferred standards into the databases.

So all of the states got together and came up with some standards that we can incorporate into our certificates of Veterinarian inspection that would make it easier to exchange data with some consistency.

Integrate USDA databases so that information flows between them.

And with that I think they were referring to some of the - well you have - you guys probably could - Brian could probably explain USDA databases actually better than me.

I think mostly they were talking about surveillance databases and EMRS.
EMRS stands for Emergency Management - E-M, management...

Dr. (Jones): Response.

Rosalyn Floyd: ...Response System. And it's the system that's used to kind of a tap tracking and now (unintelligible) system used during an outbreak. So during (unintelligible) they (unintelligible) extensively.

And the problem is the day-to-day databases, you know, just to get the day-to-day surveillance integrating with that and then not pushing the data back into the day-to-day databases. Establish capacity for SCS data. That's the...

Man: Surveillance Collaboration Services.

Rosalyn Floyd: Thanks.

Man: So it's another database that - EMRS is - as Dr. (Jones) just pointed out - is usually used for outbreak response. We've used it for other type of responses, but it's typically our emergency management system.

SCS, Surveillance Collaboration Services, is more aligned to our day-to-day surveillance activities for program - programmatic-type diseases like (unintelligible) here and TB, Brucellosis, those types of things.

Rosalyn Floyd: And then similar to SCF, which is kind of the federal system and a lot of states use it also. States have developed their own day-to-day surveillance systems, so USAHerds is one that several states has - have - they subscribed to, but there's several out there. (Unintelligible) in California we don't use USAHerds. We use it - our own.

But have a - and again as Brian mentioned it's not impossible to do. It's a prioritization and limited resources issue, but to have it so that that information can move back and forth seamlessly.

So if you want to keep your at-risk populations current it's easiest to keep it close to local as possible and then not (unintelligible) that risk - that at-risk information and then get uploaded into EMRS during an outbreak. And then you'd want to download that information back into those day-to-day systems after the outbreak so you could keep a historical record of disease (unintelligible).

So that's kind of what Number 4 is talking about is that movement both directions.

And then the last one cause - create a pathway and method for migration of animal I.D. from (unintelligible) MIMS. I don't know what that stands for. I know what it's used for. I don't know what it is though.

Man: Mobile Information Management System. So it's the handheld data collection.

Rosalyn Floyd: Right. So when we do - for larger animals, not so much poultry, but larger animals - when you use electronic I.D. like for TB testing or whatever. We collect a lot of data and then that information gets updated into the day-to-day databases, which would be SCS, KORE1, USAHerds. So just improve that integration.

And then development of - or integration with - MCBI or other certificates of Veterinary inspections.

So basically that six bullet point is just talking about continued development of electronic and user friendly applications for a certificate of Veterinary inspections so that that data can move between databases.

And I think the rest is kind of more along the - is just more detail along the same ideas.

And then there's - there was support for continuing the collaboration between states and USDA and their - the oversight of information management.

So my last comment. None of this is new to USDA and I don't think there is a (unintelligible) to any of it. It was just reiterating. All - what we would like to see is Western State Veterinarians as resources become available.

Right, Brian, and none of that's new?

Man: No. It's not new and I - some of these connections - essentially this boils down to making better connections between systems and we recognize the need for that.

I don't think there is arguing any of these points. Again I think it's just in creating that IT muscle that allows us to make these things happen. We certainly have a long list of other things that we're working on at the same time. So...

Certainly - so probably the best example - because we've had an opportunity to exercise it quite extensively in the last couple of years - is the EMRS, the Emergency Management Response System.

So as Dr. (Jones) pointed out that his has been developed and built throughout the years for essentially managing emergency response, so it has a lot of pieces and parts in it from resource allocation of people and equipment and keeping track of that.

But also from the surveillance - I think animal health surveillance perspective - we also are able to collect in surveillance information during an outbreak.

So - and then took a high path to AI where you put the dot on the map and draw, you know, the 10 kilometer circle around it. We have to go and test and visit all of those, you know, commercial or backyard flocks with the 10 miles and do some sampling.

That testing goes to a laboratory. That test - those test results come back to us. They're collected in this EMRS system to ensure that we are meeting the requirements for surveillance that we pre-established. So I think that's, you know, a great example and I'm keeping this sort of in the surveillance realm, because that's what we're sort of talking about.

I think from maybe another example using a different system would be the SCS and that is not used alone particularly for (scraping) your (scrapy) expert is sitting right next to you there.

So you'll - correct me if I'm wrong - but we have a national instance of the surveillance collaboration services database that collects (scrapy) surveillance data from the whole country.

And so (Alan) as a - as the (scrapy) and Diane as the (scrapy) managers for the U.S. can see that and understand where we've got surveillance happening, where we are lacking, where we need to put additional resources, where we're

having detections and (unintelligible) allows response. So - I mean I think those are two pretty good examples.

Woman 3: I just wanted to - I brought this up very briefly with Liz before (unintelligible) what you all's recommendations were. Maybe think that this is the appropriate time to mention it.

At our June meeting I thought the concern that my stakeholders had brought to me, which is they took a look at what the discussion were, and sort of the draft, and went, oh my God. This looks a hell of a lot like you're going to start requiring all sorts of things from private producers. And our, you know (unintelligible) did that.

And I said, "Before you panic, no. That's not my impression of what's going on. My impression is - what we're dealing with is the state agencies, the federal agencies, the labs, how they're communicating. This is not about creating new requirements for producers and private (unintelligible)."

And so I brought that up at the June meeting and basically got told, okay. You go draft language.

So what Liz just typed in, if the background is (unintelligible).

Woman: When you have the data streams what's the - there's another one that's missing and probably ought to include - being included in that interactions with public health agencies.

They have data about animal health. Sometimes it doesn't show up in other places like all of the state public health ratings labs. Things that are being put

in PulseNet, fruit safety, inspection stuff that would be a good thing to cross link if at all possible.

Rosalyn Floyd: I like that you mentioned PulseNet, because I know a lot of our producers would like to have access to that information, because they want to see what's in a human population so they can see (unintelligible) chickens and, you know, be proactive - or cattle, or swine - whatever the producer is of. So I think that's a two-way street practices (unintelligible).

Woman: An attempt to make progress here. The opening paragraph for sentences that you just put together and how do you feel about those? We okay with that? Excellent.

Woman: I think maybe it sounds just like it's going - we need to go get (unintelligible).

Woman: I think...

Woman: Yes. Yes.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Yes. It's...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ...thing - things.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Okay. Point 2.

Woman: Okay.

Woman: And I think a lot of this is similar to what's coming out of that Western - the resolution. But Bullet Point 2, where we wanted to talk about - we changed the language a little bit around and said, USDA continues to prioritize leverage and work with industry to identify (unintelligible) resources to electronically generate a message, the full complement of diagnostic test results.

Are we comfortable with that language? Any wordsmithing that needs to be done for that? I'm seeing a few head nods and no shakes. Okay. I'm going to call that consensus for the moment.

Point 3. Here's one where, you know, we haven't - we're still saying that we are recommending USDA prioritize or we're talking (unintelligible) USDA should. Is there anything that we want to change on this?

I mean I think we're - we were coming - I think, (Michael), this was yours in June where we needed to look at surveillance, looking at risk assessment and risk management. If there are anything we should more stress about change at all to make it, you know, more of a partnership versus a USDA centric version?

Man: Oh as long as - no. As long as that statement is understood in the context of that perch to partner with other agencies.

Woman: I guess I - I just have a question on that. Can I look at that and (unintelligible) like and what exactly does it even mean?

Man: Okay.

Woman: Because maybe that I'm missing words, (Mark). You know, they use that way, but I look (unintelligible) it almost seems so self-obvious that I wonder what I'm missing.

Man: The data are (unintelligible) and so I want to apply some efforts to analyze, interpret, and extrapolate from those data. And then take the last step of applying the needed intervention or whatever into the community.

So it's just the whole spectrum of saying you get information, you seek to understand what it's saying to you, and then take steps to manage those risks as you understand them going forward.

((Crosstalk))

Man: Yes.

Man: We see too often that people collect data and it goes nowhere. It's sits in a, you know, a file and it doesn't get utilized. And that's not very helpful.

Woman: Is it activities or is it outcomes of the surveillance? Yes. Our outcomes would be a risk assessment, risk management outcomes?

Man: The outcomes is what I would be interested in.

Woman: Okay.

Man: Yes. Yes.

Woman: So is it better to replace process with outcomes or...

Man: No.

Woman: Or what about the (unintelligible) that USDA prioritize taking action on it, the comprehensive integrative surveillance data...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ...based on a risk assessment, risk management process?

Man: Process. Yes.

Woman: Okay.

Man: That's what we're trying to say.

Man: Could you just say based on risk analysis?

Man: Yes. That would be short version.

((Crosstalk))

Man: Analysis.

Man: (Unintelligible) do something with the data.

Woman: I like that.

Man: Yes.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: We're making progress, folks. Point 4...

Man: And what...

Woman: Go ahead.

Man: What if there's nothing (unintelligible)? Are we asking (unintelligible) even when there may be any action necessary?

Woman: Well - but that's (unintelligible) no action necessary. I think...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ...it's really (unintelligible) take out...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ...no action.

Man: ...doing something (unintelligible).

Woman: Yes.

Man: Okay.

Woman: Then...

((Crosstalk))

Man: That's (unintelligible).

Rosalyn Floyd: Point 4. This gets into some of the fuzzy area we were talking about before.

We (unintelligible) reportable animal diseases be typed at the comprehensive integrated surveillance and reports be made available. Probably be made publicly available.

And that making information readily available to external customers and stakeholders. That's an incomplete sentence.

((Crosstalk))

Rosalyn Floyd: Yes. Maybe that should be comma making (unintelligible).

Man: If you just said publicly available would you - you could just take out all of that?

Woman: Yes.

Rosalyn Floyd: Yes. Do we need to say publicly and timely available? I mean I - is that - timely is kind of a - I mean timely isn't defined either.

You know, so if you're going to define, you know - I mean the best case scenario is live data. And then some of the models that we were showing at the last meeting was - were really cool, or as the data allows it to be available. (Unintelligible) I mean if things are reported weekly obviously you can't have it more available than that.

Woman: It would (unintelligible).

Man: I don't (unintelligible).

Woman: All right. Because it's going to vary so much, and it's also going to vary on your - so again it (unintelligible) the question of, like, which data, like, all of this data? (Unintelligible) we're just going to create a lot of data. And, you know, so I think they (unintelligible) data is collected to (unintelligible).

Woman: Well and it makes (unintelligible) to be analyzed and clean and reported and also extremes like that. But...

Rosalyn Floyd: We happy with Point 4?

Man: Good. Just to clarify on Point 4 - you're talking about not that the data be available, but the summaries, right? When you say the reports that...

Woman: Right. Yes.

Man: ...whatever summaries they're...

Woman: Yes.

Man: And the summary reports?

Man: Yes. It's something - the analyzed product I guess.

Rosalyn Floyd: So that talks just about reports on (unintelligible). Do we need to talk about other reports around other routine surveillance for things that aren't - well I guess pretty much everything is going to be (unintelligible).

Dr. McCluskey is above and beyond what's reportable?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Well yes. NLRAD can incorporate all of our program diseases and some non-program diseases, and then diseases we don't even know about yet. So I think that pretty much covers it.

Rosalyn Floyd: Okay.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Yes. I'm not sure we've worked out that everything will be reported sort of under the umbrella of NLRAD.

Woman: Excellent question.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: I mean I think most of the reports that we generate from program diseases we already make publicly available as the data allows. So I think we're covered, but I (unintelligible).

Rosalyn Floyd: And, like - and can just throw something out like - I don't know - BBD. I mean it's an endemic disease. Will it be reportable under NLRAD and is it currently being surveilled and, you know.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: I don't remember if BDD is on the NLRAD list or not. But we certainly don't have a program for it at this point. And so we aren't really collecting any data for it. So I would say weren't - we have nothing to report.

Woman: But if it became - if the data became available and the data from the diagnostic lab...

Woman: Yes. If you...

Woman: ...then...

Woman: ...pull data from all of these other labs that are currently not getting anything you're going to have - from people that are testing for PI like we do - that would be available then.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Yes.

Woman: So - and things like (unintelligible) condemnations are not reportable - not necessarily reportable diseases, and yet the industry wants that data.

Rosalyn Floyd: So you look (unintelligible) that we, you know, recommended that NLRAD be tied to or report - maybe we should say be reported into this comprehensive integrated surveillance. But definitely start a new sentence and just say some of the reports of comprehensive integrated surveillance should be made publicly available? Does that cover? Okay.

Point 5. This again is consistent with, you know, the recommendations we saw, some - the Western Veterinarians. But of course where we have (unintelligible) has to be (unintelligible).

I mean I think obviously what we're trying to do and this is say that everybody's databases should talk to each other, and it shouldn't just be one-way communication. It should be going both ways.

If this - does this language capture that or do you all have some good suggestions on how to make it clearer?

Woman: I don't know how to capture it in words and prep. Somebody can suggest something, but for example in the (EMER) system in the midst of an outbreak there - it's the state that's - maybe shouldn't just have access, but maybe they should receive alerts. So there should be some forward messaging.

So I don't know quite exactly how to do that. But there was some examples - for example from the AI investigation where if a statement went in they would find out that certificates of Veterinarian inspection from an affected area had been issued to their state. And if they didn't go in and check that day they never found out about that.

Rosalyn Floyd: Yes. And that's what we're trying to say in that second sentence. How can (unintelligible) reported to (EMERS) maybe should...

((Crosstalk))

Rosalyn Floyd: ...you know, to find those officials that would require knowledge from...

Woman: Right.

Rosalyn Floyd: ...state, federal...

Man: I think what you say there is accurate, and I (unintelligible) and I don't know - of course some (unintelligible) has been answered, but to (unintelligible) straight I get an email exchange every time (unintelligible) and open or closed, something's been added, so I don't know if that every time something's been (unintelligible) get notified, but some (unintelligible).

Woman: So you think (unintelligible)?

Man: I know that capability exists. I don't - it may get turned on and turned off depending on the situation.

Man: I don't know, but every time it happens.

Man: Careful what you ask for, right?

Woman: Yes.

Man: Well I wonder if that's not so much an on/off switch as it is a trigger level where there's a level of outbreak we do need to know.

((Crosstalk))

Man: And not just having...

Man: ...want to know about it'd be that I don't (unintelligible) but then that - then it gets really (unintelligible) and that's...

Woman: Right.

Man: ...standard for...

Woman: Within the (EMERS)...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ...you can control that through your profile. You can tell it when you want to get pinged and not pinged.

Man: Okay. Well...

Man: Yes.

Man: ...I haven't changed my (EMERS) profile since forever, but all of the sudden I started getting notifications. So I don't know what has...

Man: But also...

Man: (Unintelligible) the system got adjusted somehow.

Man: Also in regard to that I'm wondering if you're in a border region where you've got three or four states all together and you've got a little outbreak here, a little (unintelligible) here, a little (unintelligible) here, a little (unintelligible) here, but now you've got some of the focus of something that may spread and multiply, you know (unintelligible).

Do you all get notified or does nobody get notified? And that would be something that might want - we might want to include in this. Is there a way to have some sort of multi-state trigger where each of you get notified, hey, you don't have it necessarily. There's a (unintelligible) problem in your state specifically, but you've got this (unintelligible) area around all of your states where you might want to start looking (unintelligible).

Man: And I think that that's (unintelligible) the reports (unintelligible) should notify those who acquire knowledge, but what is required of knowledge.

(Unintelligible). But there are some (unintelligible) that I should know something that I want to know.

Man: That might be a meeting for the state feds at USDA to have as a group where you can hash that out.

Man: (Unintelligible) but it should. Those things...

((Crosstalk))

Man: And I think maybe the (EMERS) profile part is...

((Crosstalk))

Man: ... coming from (unintelligible).

Man: I didn't know that (unintelligible).

Woman: Yes. I mean it maybe just needs that - needs to be (unintelligible) cleaned up, whatever it is so that you guys can control, because it also is, like, you know, you may not be worried about a X disease...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Yes.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: The other - sorry.

Man: Oh (unintelligible).

Woman: I (unintelligible) going to say what I heard earlier from (Annette) that I think that's within this is the issue of clarifying that - to reporting (unintelligible) systems being - also being able to down - both upload and download back down. So that bits of data can move both - yes, by directionally. There.
Thanks.

Rosalyn Floyd: So, Brian, just to make sure that I'm (unintelligible) here - I know that every time I - we say (unintelligible) the animal disease center, somebody at the (unintelligible) tells me I should be saying something about NBSL as well.

Is - NBSL, is that - I mean is that - NBSLs flash PIADC or...

Man: Yes. I mean I don't know that we can speak for PIADC, because that includes ARS and DHS. So I would just put (Athus) or put (10 DSL) dash Plum Island.

Rosalyn Floyd: Okay.

Man: I mean the diagnostic work is done by NBSL Plum Island, not by DHS and ARS.

Woman: Actually they've been referring to themselves as FADDL, F-A-D-D-L.

Man: Yes FADDL.

Woman: And then...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ...when they move to...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ...the new facility it'll still be FADDL.

Man: Yes, FADDL would cover it. That's good.

Woman: And that would cover both of them, right?

Man: Yes. Yes.

Woman: Okay.

Woman: Farm Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory.

Woman: Something to remember is a ton of that work is done at NBSL proper.

Woman: And so this FADDL is just (unintelligible) NBSL (unintelligible)?

Woman: Yes.

Woman: So - okay.

((Crosstalk))

Rosalyn Floyd: Okay. You want me to put NBSL on it?

Woman: Yes. Yes.

Rosalyn Floyd: FADDL is technically one of the laboratories of India, so (unintelligible) back up. Okay. Happy with Number 5?

So here's where I think our challenge is. We started this today and talked about all these different surveillance streams.

So (unintelligible) we named some very nice surveillance streams, but we really have not given any indication of how any data could move from those streams. I think maybe slaughter house condemnations is already a done deal, but, you know, some of those other areas - especially when we get into, you know, whether it's observational data, or private data, whatever - I think we - the FDA can benefit from our suggestions and how some of that data might be collected.

Man: But that didn't apply to state labs - or to state slaughter facilities, state inspected slaughter facilities. They don't necessarily have that same information and that same feedback. So you're going to have that issue.

But I guess (unintelligible) my questions is statistically how much (unintelligible) information do you have to have? We don't have to have every last carcass going through a slaughter facility. We don't have to have every last Veterinary certificate.

How much is necessary from a sampling standpoint for you to get the information you need to actually find the disease? And that might help to define how much that you really want to look at, how much do you really need.

Man: Was that a question?

Man: That is something of a question, yes. How much of that information...

Man: Well we do that - what - yes. Absolutely.

Man: Yes. You don't need to have it all. How much do you need?

Man: Absolutely. And I think a great example of that is our Brucellosis - Bovine Brucellosis surveillance, which, you know, in the past we were collecting a sample from every test eligible animal that went through slaughter and testing it for Brucellosis.

And now we're down to 8 plants, 10 plants that we're collecting 3 million samples or less per year now, because our - we've been free in the domestic curve for almost 10 years.

So you're absolutely right. The sampling scheme becomes really important for appropriate resource allocation and efficiency and all of that good stuff.

But we can only get there sometimes with a data that come with that sample. So understand where it came from, what kind of herd it came from, because then you'll understand what your sampling. That's why my mantra about testing does not equal surveillance, still applies.

Running the test is not enough. You've got to have the information associated with the sample and the test to understand what it is you're testing.

How much of that long list do we...

((Crosstalk))

Man: Yes.

Man: (Unintelligible) that makes a difference in what we're telling them. If you only need a random sample every, you know, so many days from (unintelligible) states that's a whole different thing from I need every single Veterinary feed directive (unintelligible) into my office.

Man: (Unintelligible) it actually goes back to (unintelligible)...

Woman: Sure.

Man: ...because you would...

Man: yes.

((Crosstalk))

Man: You know, for (unintelligible). You know, we don't sample every sheep (unintelligible) that goes through a facility. We (unintelligible) certain number of heads.

Man: (Unintelligible) we've done a lot of work to determine how many we need and where we need them from.

Woman: Actually for scrapy we are trying to sample every targeted animal. I - that meets a certain PETA (unintelligible) MH criteria.

Man: I know (unintelligible).

((Crosstalk))

Man: Right. To me it would be important for USDA to determine - right - how much surveillance data is really needed and what streams - or - should they get it from? You know, where are the gaps? Because you right - might not need it from all of those points, but how much do you - you know, where is the gaps in coverage?

((Crosstalk))

Man: And then, (Willy) - to follow up on that - once we understand the gaps and maybe come back, test, and say, how can we work with the industry on best filling in those gaps? Instead of us generating a whole long list and saying - I mean there's a bunch of stuff up there, but I would say a lot of it's probably not needed to be honest with you.

Man: So, Brian, that's what we need to know is where are the gaps? We - I'm not sure we know. Some of us may, but most of us probably don't.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Sure. I think if we spent a lot of time in all of the commodity groups developing surveillance plans that would include important (unintelligible) of interest to those specific commodities and identify the surveillance streams for each - that's what's in those plans - and have actually identify the gaps.

So I think we have most of that already. It's, you know, certainly, you know, some of the things that you guys were tossing out here are pieces that, you know, it - I think we probably could do a better job on observational data - and maybe this is my own bias - but I think that there's real value in observational data for early detection and other things, and we're probably not as far along with that as we could be.

By the diagnostic and industry laboratories is, you know - it was a great question from Dr. (Reed) - it's a gap. We're trying to address what the NL ran.

The VFD (unintelligible) on, you know, we're - I already mentioned we're a ways away from doing much with that. And FDA is going to want to - is going to be collecting and I think our role will be a little bit different relative to that.

So I think in our surveillance plans, which we have, we're constantly re-updating them and our sector meetings that we have once a year with industries help us identify what, you know, what their needs are, what their desires are, what they view as gaps, and that's all incorporated in that point, those plans. So - or I think we know, or at least - I wouldn't say we know. We've addressed the evaluation of that and what those gaps are. So I think we have it. There's probably a good - at least one or two private ones.

Woman: So, Brian, what is - I guess then what is the barrier as an example to - and maybe we just go down (unintelligible) I think you said we're still collecting - we're doing pretty well with collecting slaughter house condemnation data from major packers.

Well so then secondly what is the barrier to collecting CBI data? Is it just that it's not electronic? And then - you know, so what's the barrier to moving to electronic CBIs?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Right. So for that one I - I mean I'm obviously not an IT person, so I don't know what the technical barriers are, but I'm sure there are some technical barriers.

I know part of it is there are multiple certificate of Veterinarian inspection collection systems out there. We have one (unintelligible) has one. There's probably a good - at least one or two private ones. And so - while some standardization is in effect there - I think that, you know, those are all separate IT systems that now all need to be sort of figured out how that can get integrated.

So again I'm not an IT person. I don't know if that's a heavy lift or an easy lift. I really don't know.

(Unintelligible) I think you've got it there, Liz, is the confidentiality issues. How much can we share? Is that sharing needed? Just in the event of an incident or an outbreak, or does that need to be happening on a consistent basis. So I think that, not only from a technical perspective of other issues, but there may be some policy issues there too.

But that's - I can't say too much more about the technical side of the, you know, that (unintelligible) what that would look like. But the needs would be there.

Woman: And there's also going to be policy considerations in terms of the issue for private that - again sort of small rural areas. You know, 20 years from now this may be a very, very, very different discussion. This point - if I went back and told all of our large animals that they were going to have to switch to electronic (unintelligible) you know, CBIs, you know, that's a problem.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Some - no. Some of them may. But there's...

Man: Yes.

Woman: ...going to be - but for others there's going to be a problem.

Man: Yes. I guess I would challenge that. I don't understand why that's a problem, because - I mean it - as (unintelligible) I mean - actually I think most people would actually walk from that if there are good systems in place. So I'm trying to understand where that was coming from.

Woman: Because we're dealing in - you know, at least in some areas we're dealing with much older (unintelligible) a lot, you know, the (unintelligible) large animals that we have are the ones that have hung on. They're not necessarily (unintelligible) with it technology. They aren't necessarily equipped to go out in the field with laptops or iPads. I mean it just - it's not the young kids coming right out of vet school.

And again that's what I'm saying, you know, give it a - you know, what I - 9, 20 years may be completely off, it may be a 10 year discussion, whatever. But at this exact moment while some would welcome it, but there'd be issues, and given our problems with not having enough large animal vets to begin with...

Man: But would you agree that we really need to help drive that change? I mean it's inevitable. I mean I was - I remember a conversation about - with someone who was upset because digital signals and media TV, and felt that that was so wrong that people were forced to get rid of their rabbit ears and have to take the digital signals.

And then we - I think in the end we were agreeing that there is so much plus, positives, going with that digital technology that the idea remaining in the 19th or 20th century was that technology was just not realistic.

So should this committee - I mean it seems that we would want to take a position that change is not only inevitable, but it's not a bad thing actually.

Woman: Only if there's a commitment to help the veterinarians through that change. So that's - you know, my concern is what we've heard in the past and pushed us towards electronics is, yes there's benefits to electronics, and therefore everyone should switch over, stop being in the dark ages period.

And whatever those benefits are...

Man: So what kind of (unintelligible)...

Woman: ...if we lose - you know, God forbid we bring the funding. I mean (unintelligible) contrary. I mean if there was a commitment that Veterinarians - well, you know, in - what - you know, large animals (unintelligible) would have their technical cost and training under it. This again would be a very different discussion.

I doubt USDA is prepared to do that. I mean...

Man: I think what I'm saying is that...

Woman: But that's what I'm saying. I mean that would...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ...that would be the difference.

Man: ...IT person either, so I probably shouldn't be talking so much about this stuff.

You know, it's safe to say most of those Veterinarians - if not 100% - have smart phone technology today, because you just really can't do business without it.

Well...

Woman: Not my vet.

Man: Well...

Woman: (Unintelligible) flat out, my vet - I know for a fact (unintelligible) I doubt he's the only one in that position.

Man: Let me rephrase this. I bet all of those folks who pump gasoline have to use the computer on the gas station, because you just don't have the manual pumps that we used to having when I was a kid.

My point is we're all...

Woman: They had to put in that infrastructure. All they have to do is run their credit card.

Man: Yes.

Woman: I hear what you're - and one response is pay for the infrastructure.

Man: And it's the same model.

Woman: Pay for the cost of the change-up.

Man: It's the same model. We're not asking them to build the system. We're simply saying this is what you'll be expected to use as part of the national strategy to stay safe.

Either the committee is saying it's - that's the future or it's not. If it - if we think that's the future then we need to just accept that and be clear about it.

That is if these databases are going to merge and we're going to...

Woman: But...

Man: ...need to share information.

Woman: Okay. So this was part of the point of the beginning statement. And I only - this is why I only stepped in when we started going to electronic CBIs as part of this conversation.

I think there's a lot of improvement that can be done before we start putting the burdens on private vets. I mean so the first point is, yes. I mean - so first of all there's a lot that can be done right now, what - within the state, you know, federal government, you know, labs (unintelligible) to improve.

Before we start telling private vets that they have to do electric CBIs there needs to be the commitment to how is that cost and change ever going to happen? Because we can't afford to lose that.

Man: We (unintelligible)...

Woman: We can't afford...

((Crosstalk))

Man: ...it's going to be an animal that (unintelligible) been connected either. And that's the (unintelligible).

Woman: Show...

Man: You know...

Woman: Show me the proof...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ...that the electronic CBI is the biggest point of breakdown. And we've just gone through a whole list of points or breakdown of where the system isn't working well. And I'm, you know - so let's get those specs and show me that the electronic CBIs is the biggest point of breakdown.

Man: Hey, Liz, do we even need to make a list? Is it necessary that a list of the various sources or just say that we're interested in...

Woman: Yes. Great point, (Dave).

That's kind of what I was trying to get to where it's like I think (Athus) is already - or, you know, got this list (unintelligible).

Man: Yes. Yes. They know the list better...

((Crosstalk))

Man: ...than we do and...

Woman: ...better than we do (unintelligible).

Man: ..they know the gaps.

Woman: I was going to say- but I think the thought is are there things we can in the next few minutes of discussion - and we'll close it up pretty quickly - offer up as a recommendations to help them access or (unintelligible) you know, get through - you know, bridge some those gaps.

Man: So...

Woman: I was looking for the right word.

Man: ...I sort of think that the - maybe that's already been stated here that - right, if you want to get information from somebody give them something back for the information. And so those are just alliances that you develop with the industries.

If, you know, the dairy industry wants to share their (DHAA) information, but what do they get for giving it to you? How does it benefit the dairy industry and conversely how does it help (Athus)?

So I think those are just encouraging (Athus) developed to look for those opportunities to make a win-win situation.

Man: Yes. And, (Dave), I think (unintelligible) is prioritize what those data streams are, and then really work with those industries and getting those, you know, those alliances together.

So if it's back to - if you think access to CBIs is the most important thing on this list then maybe do what (Judith) says and you invest in trying to make sure that everybody has the technology to create CBIs. That's - if that's priority.

If that's - if it's not, if it's low on that list then don't make that investment, and understand that at least in the near future - until we get new Veterinarians on the - they're all using smart phones - we're not going to using electronic CBIs.

Man: What (unintelligible)...

Man: Maybe when we graduate today...

((Crosstalk))

Man: ...have a sale (sic) - have a smart phone.

Man: Yes.

Man: Everyone.

Man: Well absolutely. So in the near future that'll change.

Man: Yes.

Man: And, you know - and I would argue that most of the older Veterinarians - at least in Michigan - I can't speak for Texas - are making that change.

So - Texas is a different world, right?

Woman: Okay. So let's try to wrap this section up. (Unintelligible) with a question we are given (unintelligible) how to gain access to the surveillance streams back in - I think January we talked about it and June - and we kind of summarized. I think (Willy) can help summarizing as basically said to determine which data we want accessing and the gaps to meet our surveillance goals.

And then - you know, and then I put in the (unintelligible) would work with the (unintelligible) to provide recommendations. But what I'm hearing you say is it's going to (unintelligible) committee (unintelligible) identify the gaps to meet your surveillance goals then continue to work with the industries to identify the - identify and prioritize the streams. Prioritize (unintelligible) to wait for that.

And then how do we get that whole (unintelligible).

Man: (Unintelligible) prioritize.

Woman: So are there...

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Can I say something...

Woman: Yes.

Dr. Brian McCluskey: ...UN?

Woman: Get me out of the (unintelligible).

Dr. Brian McCluskey: (Unintelligible) get you out of it, I'm just - so I'm just speaking for maybe me, but - well I guess I'm not. I'm speaking for vet services.

I think the partnerships are established to be honest. I think what we really need to establish are - we're kind of beyond the partnerships part. I think we're at the policies part. Or maybe policy isn't the right word, but - I mean we have great partnerships with poultry, great partnerships with swine, great partnerships with cattle, and they - I think in our conversations, and, Liz, you know this very well - we talk to you guys about the gaps. We've talked to you about what streams are important. We've talked to you about prioritizing and (unintelligible) I mean, you know, we've done that.

Now we're kind of getting down to that point where we really need to establish what a specific sharing policy - and I know that's, you know, a little bit trite - but those sharing parameters or whatever are, because we need to make sure we - you know, address issues of confidentiality and protection, at the same time meeting those goals. So that would be my only comment.

And the same with our state animal health official partners. I mean, you know, we partner with them every day. Now we're down to the point where how do we get to the point where here's what you guys can share, because it's different from each state, and here's what we can give you back.

Man: Well - so, Brian, is that a discussion then that's just between USDA and the industry partner that you're talking about? Or what is our role? What are you looking for from us then when it comes to - I (unintelligible) say policy. What are you asking us?

Dr. Brian McCluskey: Well, I mean - yes. I - maybe just to say that we're - specifically say that it's - we're to the point where it is around developing the green that's between industries and USDA and USDA and states.

And not - maybe be a little bit more specific than just the partnership part I guess is my - I mean we partner - I think we partner real well. We're always working on that. I mean there's glitches here and there, no doubt about it, but to me in working on this - I've been working on this for a really long time, and, you know, we just really need to get down to putting down on paper what that agreement looks like between us and who (unintelligible) what could be shared and what can be shared back.

Man: We use the (unintelligible) industries here a lot and we are able to capture information from industries. (Unintelligible) organized groups.

There are - in my part of the country - lots of folks, and frankly most of my (unintelligible) and stuff chasing problems are not those who are organized. And they wouldn't consider themselves part of industry.

And there are, I think, differential disease risks, and that this comprehensive surveillance is about establishing disease risk, I think the industry where we have data from - and perhaps have agreements with - may have a different profile when you look into these risks from (unintelligible) those folks who are not.

And I'm not sure that many of - the ones that I deal with and I know personally and have my cell phone number are comfortable giving me their information. There are others who are less so, but I think it's important to have access to that surveillance information too.

And if we delete the partnerships piece and just work on what we've already got, I think we miss that. And that's a big risk, and a big hole I think. I don't know how to capture it in here, and for - and you represent that group, and I deal with them. How do we keep them involved in this? Because I think we miss too much (unintelligible) out here. Or it focus just on the industry.

But maybe the industry is the piece we need to focus on right now, because we have most of that done. And the other one is a down the road thing, but I don't think we should forget about it.

Man: (Unintelligible) actually (unintelligible) actually jumping to almost where I was going to go, which I mean I think we have on the schedule for this afternoon, you know, issue of outreach to non-traditional partners, and I think - and also just (unintelligible) has already been (unintelligible) on the table, our folks are just as interested and need the assurance of how is the data going to be used, and what goes back - you know, what comes back to them?

You know, and that's part of the outreach, is a by directional conversation which I really just (unintelligible) you, because yes, our groups aren't as easy to communicate with. Our folks - it's more diverse and decentralized.

Man: And I think too one of the things that I might start with is that word surveillance, because it immediately calls to mind big brother looking over my shoulder. And we need another way to say that. I'm not interested in having somebody surveilling what I'm doing.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Well I mean - and it (unintelligible) goes - it's in that caption that's a (unintelligible) which is vital and it goes back to (unintelligible) issue, which

is our folks having to understand what is the purpose of it, how is it going to be used, you know? Why, you know, what's happening with this data? Not just being told by the government, oh yes. We want information on you. But the feeling like there's - there is a partnership, and our - yes, our community doesn't yet have a partnership, but we're (unintelligible).

((Crosstalk))

Woman: It actually sounds like the data collection is already happening whether people like it or not. And so maybe it's just the policy on sharing the data really is what we're talking about.

Man: Sharing (unintelligible).

Woman: Is really how vast to share it.

Man: There's...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Because...

Man: ...there's a (unintelligible) that.

Woman: ...the USDA has traditionally captured data for years and years and years that make some groups comfortable, and - you know, you don't want to be the commodity group with the most salmonella. But the data is out there. I mean realistically that - USDA has captured all of that kind of data and at times it makes different commodity groups comfortable or less comfortable. There are age breakdowns for disease and various animals and, you know, we looked for

BSC in older cows and not younger cows. I mean they have all of that data, found it all.

And we already know they're collecting it now. They have access to all of these other streams. So really what we're talking about is sharing data.

Man: I think though...

Woman: And the policies on sharing.

Man: I think though that a large part of that concern is I am very small and you are very big and you carry a very big stick. And if you find anything at all while you are surveilling my little farm I have no real recourse. I can hire an attorney for about a week and then I'm done.

Woman: But they don't go to the farm and do the surveillance. The animals - the surveillance happens...

Man: We're talking about...

Woman: ...when the animals...

Man: ...perception.

Woman: ...enter the food chain.

Woman: Perceptions. And when you're talking about collecting on farm observations we are talking about on the farm.

So what perception is - I don't want you around, because you can do very harmful things to me in a very short order and there's very little I can do about it.

Woman: But they're not on the farm collecting the observations unless the farm is trying to collect in density, because they got AI or - yes. I mean realistically a lot of the producers that (unintelligible) talk about it...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ...but when are they on a small...

Woman: But they're...

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ..but what we're talking about is - if I understand what we're talking about here first of all - is about expanding. You know, first of all it's not just about what David is right now, but it's expanding data, expanding who gets the data. In fact (unintelligible) all folks aren't all that happy when the (unintelligible) gets (unintelligible) for the reasons that David articulated.

It's - the difference between a lot of our types of producers and the commodity groups is that the commodity groups are organized - and although certainly they are not nearly in the same size as the federal government - they are sizable enough to feel that they have a voice and they have ability to defend themselves if there is data being misused, if there's a use of a data that's a problem.

Our folks - I mean (unintelligible) shared - you know, I've shared with David, but (unintelligible) a lot our folks were glad to see the health care issues - not all - the health care as they come through. Because at least our groups didn't have to keep doing fundraisers every time a farmer broke their arm and didn't have the money for an ER visit.

Okay? They don't have the resources to hire an attorney. They don't have industry groups to band together and back them in the same way. And so there's just a lot of fear. And that's the bottom line. There is a lot of fear, because it is all too easy for them to get put out of business very, very, very quickly and be completely out.

So agree or disagree? I'm actually not - here's the (unintelligible) I'm not trying to convince you to see it the same way. The point is sharing with you where our folks are coming from and how they look at it.

So if the goal is to increase data collection and increase communication you all are going to have to understand that that's the starting point. Agree, disagree - that's not the point. That's the starting point and how do those concerns get addressed.

Woman: All I'm saying is that from all of the conversations that we've had here and we've got (Sher) visiting us. It is very clear that (unintelligible) are not the resources to be doing surveillance on your stakeholders, on the farm.

So let's communicate that.

Woman: And (unintelligible) understand that. That's what this is (unintelligible) conversation (unintelligible).

Woman: Okay. But what is - yes. You're sitting here listening to Dr. (Sher), the person who has anywhere from five backyard chickens to a flock of 100 sheep is (unintelligible) sitting at this table with Dr. (Sher).

And so, yes. There - there's a big gap between what's being said at this table and what they hear, what they think, how they view things. So bridge that gap if you want - you know, to get more cooperation.

Woman: And one of the ways to bridge that gap - I mean you - you're working with our group, you're working with industries, listening sessions across the country. There has to be something taken to the public to be more transparent. That's something the FDA can do. It - Brian McCluskey's Veterinary services can do.

Those are the kind of things that people have told me, they'd like more transparency of what you're going to do with the data. Why you're getting it? And those kind of listening sessions around the country would be something you could do to try to get more people comfortable with what you're doing and why.

Man: I mean I sort of think there is some reasonable fear for giving up information. We just had a discussion this morning about the emerging diseases. Discussion of which included going back to the farm and doing outbreak investigations. And what happens when they do find something bad? And who's making the decision about what happens when they find something bad?

And the way that emerging disease got detected was because somebody was doing some surveillance. So it's not an unreasonable fear. It's the reason why

we should be discussing how that information gets used and who has access to it.

Woman: Okay. So I think this has been a really good discussion.

If you take a look at 6, CSC captured what we've (unintelligible) discussed about determined - how to determine which data access, to identify our animal house surveillance goals, continue to work to identify and prioritize streams, and establish parameters and protocols for sharing, ongoing partnerships with the industry (unintelligible) should continue.

And outreach to non-traditional stakeholders should be established. And the committee urges USDA states, Veterinarians and industries, to move forward and implementation of dating (sic) - data sharing. And somehow it's industries and non-traditional (unintelligible) I mean - help me figure out if there should be something else in that last sentence.

Woman: I don't think we're at the stage...

Woman: Okay.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Got - okay. Got you. Okay. And then Point 7 could either be a sub-point, but I thought it was very important to capture what was just said about increased - recommending increased transparency on what will be done with the data collected as part of comprehensive surveillance.

And so I think I'd take - you know, if you all would take a look at that and see if we're done word (unintelligible).

Woman: Yes.

Woman: So that was the end of our recommendations that we had. Is the committee comfortable, I can, you know, clean this up, make sure we check grammar, accept all the changes, bring it back tomorrow for consensus on if we want to move it up to the secretary's office. Great. Good. Yes, what I'll do, I'll e-mail it to (Diane), because she'll have your, the entire list of everybody to e-mail it out to. And then I think we're probably good for about a 15-minute break here. Come back about 3:15.

Man: Can I ask one question before we...

Woman: Sure.

Man: I don't want to lose the conversation on the electronic CVIs and the value. Can we add that tomorrow to the recommendations on discussion topics for next year?

Woman: Yes.

Man: At the end of tomorrow?

Woman: Yes. That'd be great.

Man: Thanks.

Woman: Would you remember to, okay, perfect. Sounds great. Do you need to let the operator know? Operator, are you there?

Coordinator: Yes, I am.

Woman: Operator, we're going to take a 15-minute break, then we'll re-adjourn.

Operator Okay, great, thank you.

Woman: Thank you.

Woman: It's all yours.

Woman: Okay, so I just got nominated, apparently. Okay.

Man: I am, I can. I can jump right in

Woman: Please do.

Alan Huddleston: Great. Okay, well, my name's Alan Huddleston. I'm also with USDA, I am Dr. (Sutton)'s colleague on the sheep and goat health program. So I'm also one of the scrapie guys that Dr. (McCluskey) alluded to, so thank you for having me today. When this meeting was arranged, Diane came to me and said that she thought it would be good if we could put a discussion into the agenda about VS outreach strategies, what's worked, what could be improved upon, what are opportunities for reaching audiences we don't traditionally reach.

And so I went ahead, so I agreed to that partly in that I, we all have to take additional duties as desk officers, and one that I have is helping design communication and outreach plans, a template that each one of the commodity groups in veterinary services can use.

And so we are in the middle of preparing that template and so this is a great opportunity to talk with you all about things that we might add in to those, that template for those communication plans, those outreach and communication plans.

So as I, and mostly I'm hoping that you guys do the talking, I'm not really here to hear myself speak at all. This is really for me to hear what you have to say. I'll answer any questions and give you any information to help guide the conversation, but this is really your conversation, since this is your committee.

When I was listening to Dr. (Shearer) this morning, he said two things that jumped out at me, that I think are very salient to the conversation we're going to have. The first was that this is a partnership, and this is the beginning of a dialogue, not a beginning for you guys, you're in the middle of it. But it's a dialogue, an ongoing dialogue, so that we can best achieve our mission if we're working together.

And so in order to do that, we have to have very good open lines of communication with all different types of audiences that we work for, and we work for the entire population of the United States.

The other thing that he mentioned that I thought was very interesting was that the HPAI or high pathogenic Asian influenza outbreak that we had in 2015 opened the secretary's eyes to this, what most average Americans would think of as a relatively unknown agency, how important it is to animal agriculture in terms of what we do.

And so outreach for us is critical, so that we can let the American public know that we exist and what it is that we do and what it is that we offer people. And

how we are here to be of assistance, and what we are in those types of outbreaks, but also what we do day to day.

So with that, I'm not going to sit here and read this synopsis that I got to, I just had pulled a couple of quotes out from a 2012 stakeholder survey that APHIS did, and they pulled out a few really interesting quotes from people who talked about what our stakeholder outreach really means and what we are.

But rather than go through that, I thought I would just start right in, in sort of more the meat of what we're going to discuss and so that was, I have a series of questions for all of you.

The very first one is not on this list, and this goes more to my role in the outreach and communication plans, but just by a show of hands and in solidarity with me please use your right hand and not your left. Who here is aware that we have business plans for the different animal commodities?

Very good. Who has read at least one of the commodity business plans? And you'd be able to find it pretty simply on our web site. Very good, excellent.

So those of you who are familiar with our business plan as it exists right now know that we do have activities that are embedded into the different objectives and strategies and activities of the business plans that have to do with outreach and communication.

Whether we're attending meetings or doing different types of outreach plan, but a question that we are addressing right now is, is the idea of having a separate or different freestanding communication and outreach plan that would be outside of the business plan, excuse me There's one model that we've looked at where a communication and outreach plan would be

incorporated into the business plans, or there'd be one document, outreach communication would be one section of that plan, and it would be something like a table, a list of activities to go along with our outreach and communication objectives.

Another is there would be a template and each commodity would design its own communication plan separate from its business plan. So if you went to that same website, you might pull down two different documents for sheep and goats. One for business plan, one for communication and outreach.

So that is just, it's a question I'd love some feedback on from this group on your feelings about which approach might be more well received by the public, what might be more valuable to people, a more, probably a longer document, if it were freestanding and independent of the business plan or a more brief outreach and communication plans incorporated into the greater business plan.

So that would be one question, and just chew on that. Another question that I have for you guys though is by another show of hands, who here at the table is signed up for, and receives, APHIS stakeholder announcements?

Ah this is a, I'm preaching to the choir at this table. So that's really good and I would just, I don't know the statistics for every commodity, but I'll just give you those for what we know for sheep and goat health. We know that we have over 6800 people who receive a message, who have signed up for sheep and goat health messages, and we send out almost one a month, a little bit more often if something comes up.

So that is one way that we reach, but of course if you're thinking around 100,000 sheep operations, 100- or 60,000 goat operations in the United States, we're not hitting everybody or even close with that number.

So I'm going to instead jump to a different question and that is what types of communication strategies are, is Veterinary Services leveraging that are effective for the groups you represent and/or groups who are not at this table who you feel you could speak for, or could speak to? And this is the positive, let's start with the happy stuff. Things that we do that strike, that jump out at you.

Man: I think from a teaching point of view, the NAHMs were, I use a lot. Because I think it enables me to show the students, you know, trends within industries and also, you know, current problems and it's more from a producer perspective. So I use those a lot, and I really appreciate those. National Animal Health Monitoring.

Alan Huddleston: Because you've piqued my interest, how do you use them? I'm just curious, how do you teach them? How do you grab the info.

Man: Well, particularly what I'll do is go through like, I'll compare feedlot studies from, looking at how trends have changed in the feedlot industry, for example, at the same time show that despite all our advances respiratory disease still remains the number one problem in feedlot cattle.

So it's very useful, same thing about showing about size of operations and the ag statistical services are very useful in that regard, especially like when you can show the nation's maps and they identify by region size of production units and those types of things, it really shows the students where industries are localized, you know, we can show them where the poultry industry is

located, where the dairy industry is located, and it really helps them understand on a national basis what agriculture really means and how important locally certain types of commodities can become.

Alan Huddleston: Well, I'm going to tell our NAHMs people that, that will just absolutely make their day. They love to hear that kind of feedback. I'm curious if anyone else around the table uses that, in either their roles in industry or as producers or even an extension, any other areas where you've used the NAHMs studies? Okay, good, very good. It's a useful tool, a really useful tool.

Woman: I used it in about an 18-hour deposition with PETA. (Unintelligible).

Man: So if I can add, I mean the message there is that that information that NAHM provides is simple to get to, easy to use, user-friendly, it's in table format, it's in graphic format, and so it's easy for us to use for teaching, for producers, outreach extension, so just keep that in mind as you're developing other material.

Alan Huddleston: Yes, I think that's a great take-home message.

Man: There we go, I'm on now. Got feedback from my stakeholders that they really do appreciate the information on the website. Some feedback, though, that it's not always easiest to find and occasionally there's outdated material there, it's not the latest version. So we had a little discussion about that could be difficult to get out once it's in cyberspace, but certainly trying to keep the website as clean as possible I think would be very good. The fact sheets are all very good, too.

Alan Huddleston: Thank you, that's a really good point, and that is, actually that's really, that's always very challenging in fact. It was less than two weeks ago I did hear

from somebody who was pointing to, you know how you can find a PDF that we long ago thought was removed from a website but somehow somebody can still get to it. And somebody had downloaded something that was like 15 years old, and they were asking me questions about why is this so dated and so wrong? And so I, you know, when we find those we do let our webmasters know that.

So of course that's another take-home message. If you ever hear anything of those, do let us know, because we will track them down and have our webmaster try to remove them. But yes, I think so.

We also, there is a project going on right now. It sometimes takes a little bit longer because of some resource challenges. At a level above me, they're at, the APHIS does have legislative and public affairs staff, which you guys are probably familiar with, or at least aware of. And they are in a project of looking at our fact sheets and those that are five years old are, or older, are being targeted for updates.

Even if there's not an update, just to say, if there's nothing new, just to say I looked at it and I've signed off that this is exactly the same as it was five years ago, nothing's changed. Which is not really true of anything, at least not in sheep and goat health.

But so that, and that's a little bit slow going because of what was mentioned this morning, we were at, the hiring freeze affected people up at Riverdale just as well as it did in the field, so they are just now building their staff back up. But that's a big thing that they're trying to push are those really simple, easy to understand, easy to digest, easy to disseminate messaging through fact sheets and other web materials, but thank you for that.

Woman: One of the things that I think has been effective, and it gets disseminated much broader than the few people that would be on the committee, but having APHIS people whether they're on committees like Animal Health Committee or a commodity organization, animal health committee for a state VMA, and then all of those committee members tend to disseminate as well as the organizations themselves when you have APHIS information and their fact sheets or in their communications.

So having that true partnership where they serve as active members on committees, and not only listen to what we've got to say but also bring information that the committee to be able to help disseminate is huge.

Man: I'd like to address that question about communications and outreach and whether it should be stand alone or part of the deal.

Alan Huddleston: Sure.

Man: And I'm going to put my extension hat on for a second here. Any time we extension and outreach is not part of everybody's job, it becomes nobody's job. They get stuck on as a little tail end, oh yes, dissemination plan, we'll put the extension guys on that, and that's the end of the thought. And as opposed to if everyone has to think about how they're going to contribute to getting this information out into the field, if you separate the two you're not going to get a good connection between the two.

It should be everybody's job, communication's everybody's job. And I guess the other thing too, you mentioned fact sheets, and I'm not going to talk about APHIS fact sheets and I'm not going to name the agency that's responsible for this, but we frequently get requests from one of our USDA federal friends to take the information that they would like to make public and run it through

our extension communications department, because they are required to say certain things in very specific ways, which make very complicated reads, and people just don't read it.

Whereas we can put it in an extension format and the newspapers and the magazines and everybody will pick it up and it gets talked about everywhere, and then we start getting questions and we can direct them back to our federal partner. But the communication's got to be simpler than that.

Alan Huddleston: I'm glad you said that wasn't APHIS, because I really appreciate that question, because that is really a pushback that we get. I'm saying as one of the staff veterinarians, that we get pushback from our legislative and public affairs people, because we will send them a fact sheet, and they'll say oh, my gosh, this makes perfect sense to you as a veterinarian who's been working on this forever. Take this back and let's cut this down to a much simpler language.

So that's a, that is a huge movement in LTA to try to make certain that APHIS documents are readable to the average American.

Man: We are supposed to write at the eight-grade level and I actually have access to Lexile to make sure that when I complete a document, it's eighth-grade level and sixth-grade level is even better, because people will actually read two levels below their reading grade level when they're reading just for relaxation and...

Woman: And I never can seem to write to that, but I know we're supposed to. It's actually in Word, you can just run it through when you do spelling and grammar in Word.

Man: Well, it didn't use to be.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: ...you said the, it needs to stay in the business plans, and I hear what you're saying and I agree with what you're saying. I have a flip piece which actually may, actually might be, it should be in both the business plans and the stand-alones. Because what you're dealing when you move outside the larger-scale, conventional industries is people who have multiple different species, and they don't fit neatly within categories and they don't fit neatly within what you're thinking about with your business plan.

So if you don't have a communications and outreach with that in mind, and it's not just, it's not the communication outreach for the cattle industry, it's not the communication outreach for the sheep and goat industry, it's the communication outreach plans for the folks who don't fit neatly into those categories, you know, that's going to keep falling through the cracks too, I think.

Alan Huddleston: That's, thank you for that, because that's a really important point, because of course we've talked about the two different sides, but we had not discussed something that would address multiple commodities in one plan, even if there were to be stand-alone plans, it would be stand-alone for cattle, stand-alone for sheep, and goats, stand-alone for aquaculture. So that was your plan, but your point is well taken then. The person who does have multiple species.

Diane and I definitely experience that with our producers, who don't just have sheep or just goats, they have multiple species on their premises.

Man: I kind of want to reiterate what Liz said about personal involvement of vet services staff. And she mentioned as committee members but also as speakers to committees, and we're non-traditional stakeholders in wildlife, and vet services comes and presents to USHA Committee on Wildlife, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and presents to the health committee there. Jack was at our steering committee meeting a couple of weeks ago down in Athens, Georgia.

And talk about (unintelligible) speak frankly with stakeholders, we had an excellent example of that here this morning. But that's obviously the most limited, the most difficult thing to pull off, but I think it's highly effective as long as the message is consistent from the VMO up into Riverdale and beyond, because sometimes the message is not consistent.

Alan Huddleston: So, and if I'm understanding you correct when you say inconsistent, would you talk about maybe so, a field veterinarian going out and having one message versus what somebody might hear from our state offices versus at a national, you know, coming out of my mouth, I'm with the American Dairy Goat Association, talking policy. That's really important, that's a key thing to get down, to get nailed down.

Man: I guess I would echo from my perspective, having a USDA field veterinarian in my state who regularly goes out with my staff in non-threatening situations makes a big impression on our producers. The consistency of communication I understand and appreciate, but I also don't want to in any way squash or limit her willingness to chat openly with my producers too.

If you put the blanket on folks in the field who are afraid in some fashion to make a comment or statement without having it vetted previously, you're

going to get back to the point where, well I can't help you right now but I'll get back to you. And that's not real helpful.

So I don't know where the balance is there, I understand what you're saying. But I also like the fact that she can go out there and chat with producers and they're as comfortable calling her as they are our office. And I think that's a fabulous thing, and it, to have that level of comfort from producers directly to federal Veterinary Services. I don't know that it's unique but it's nice to have in our state.

Alan Huddleston: Is that (Nichole)?

Man: It is.

Alan Huddleston She's fabulous.

Man: She is.

Alan Huddleston: Yes, you are. She's fantastic. So you, and you bring up something that is a strategy that we do use, because we do want to make certain that people feel free, we try to push both decision-making as well as messaging to the local level, because they're the ones who are out there. I talk to very few producers during my week, but field vets, field animal health technicians talk all the time to people out in the field, and so we do try to do internal trainings.

We happen to have a every other month webinar where we talk just policy and how to actually, what, how do they interpret strategies or policies that we have put in with our program, and we're not the only ones who do that. And with the hope that we do get the right information to our field, so that when they go out they can talk in the jargon, in the vernacular that makes the people they're

talking to comfortable, develop those personal relationships and be those key messengers but still be, maybe not parroting us, but at least getting the correct essence and accurate statements of what we intend.

So we do have maybe a uniform message, maybe not verbatim uniform but at least it's uniform in facts. But that always can be better.

Man: So I've sat through a number of federal webinars and I'm hoping yours are not the same as the ones I've had to sit through, because basically it's a lot of text on a screen, and it gets read to me. And I can do that all by myself and in fact I'm going to do what everybody else does in a webinar, I'm going to sit here and work on my little machine, I'm going to glance over once in a while and I might text a few people because my technician's new and she doesn't know everything she needs to know, and I'll come back over, yep, they're still reading off of that screen.

And if that's what they're doing, you're probably not getting that across. And so, you know, there needs to be an assessment piece at the end of the day, you've done a webinar, how do you know they actually got the information, are you doing an assessment piece there to get that information back, was that successful?

But then, you know, so kind of stick that back there because that jumped out at me there. But I was going to ask (Rick), what I really wanted to ask about was social media, because I don't see it popping up anywhere and I know that's hard to do, but there are lots and lots and lots and lots of groups out there who are involved in livestock production, and I don't care what kind of livestock it is.

Alan Huddleston: Yes.

Man: And you can reach those people.

Man: As a follow-up to that, have you tried doing any podcasts?

Man: It's not even that, you can go on Facebook groups and you can reach thousands of people who will have those ridiculous questions, and you'll answer the same question a million times, what's the best for it, there's no such thing as best, but you know, but they'll want to know, and if they get the definitive answer, no, really the BFD works this way. Because there's crazy stuff out there about the BFD and how it's going to work and you're never going to be able to buy anything and your veterinarians are all going to go to jail.

No, but if they heard directly from APHIS, this is how BFD works in real human language, right there, and then they can reference it out to their friends, share it, whatever, that gives you a tremendous reach to a lot of those people you're not ordinarily reaching when you're talking about this group of people.

Alan Huddleston: So, that, I do think that social media is an area that we could definitely work more in. Currently the way that social media works is, of course there is an APHIS Facebook, Twitter, I think there's even a Snapchat, accounts, and if we have something that we wanted to put on, so Diane or I did, that was sheep and goat related, we can go through the legislative and public affairs office with that.

So what they, but the way that it works right now is, typically LPA is fairly conservative with the use of that. So, and rightfully so. I mean, they have to be very careful about, you know, they don't want me just thinking of something at 9:30 in the morning over my coffee and doing a Tweet and sending it off,

because then it's lost. Exactly, that could be, there has to be some process in there, and that process sometimes does slow down and stymie creativity.

So, but that's a really good point is that it can be utilized and should be utilized more, and there are podcasts, to answer your question, there are more up at the USDA level. So we do have what's called a target center, it's over by the first floor on the other building. And they can help with the technology and that type of thing to develop podcasts. And maybe it was some...

Man: You can, okay, what I'm not getting at is creativity, I'm not asking you to be real creative. But for example, you've talked about fact sheets. Every fact sheet I have has been posted to, I don't know how many groups. In our first couple of years, I was in the job, I wrote something like 15 fact sheets, very simple things. And I probably posted it up to 20 small ruminant production groups. And each one of them's had at least a good 10- to 15,000 hits. Which, you know for a university that's that big is not bad, and they come from all over the world.

So even though you might have to go through this process to get something on your own Page, you can then use that Page to share out to all of these producer groups the official information. It's just, hey, here's this thing that you guys ought to be thinking about, or here's something that's interesting, or you know you do a fact sheet and you stick it up there, hey, here's the latest fact sheet on, and you get that dissemination at any hour of the day or night, and then those people will share it out for you. They see something good, it goes everywhere.

Alan Huddleston: Yes, you're correct. You are correct, amplifies.

Woman: So to, I think spell out even more what I think I hear David saying is, it's not an issue of trying to get people to follow the USDA APHIS Page, it's all looking and seeing what are the relevant groups and you going into those groups, and this is also, I mean, something you could do would be, and this would take, you know, takes time.

But you know, let's say you identify you know, 500 Facebook groups that are relevant to veterinary services, of communities that you're not reaching very well right now. You know, sort of figure out your target that you're not reaching very well, and either they're open groups and you guys can post, or they've got like an ownership, you know somebody owns them and you can, like reach out to that person and be like, oh, hi.

We're VS, we'd like, you know, we see questions popping up on your Page that we've got great resources on. Here's some that we've seen already happening, and if other questions pop up, please reach out to us and sort of start creating those networks with those groups, because those groups can have amazing reach, far more than, APHIS is never going to have major following on Facebook. You know...

Man: No, we won't. You're correct, you can get a lot of feedback that way about, additionally, people start asking you questions as you become trusted. You know, initially people would like at me, it's like who are you? And I got flamed by somebody one time who was really angry about something I wrote because I write professionally. Who are you and how dare you, where did you go to vet school? Well, sorry, you know, I didn't mean, and after that she followed everything I wrote.

But you know, you become that trusted, they'll start asking you, they'll start hitting you. Hey, what's this, has VS got something on this? Yes, we do. Here

it is. And you start getting that feedback, then they can help you develop your program further as to the things that you need to do to address their concerns. So when you show up somewhere, you know, they're glad to see you.

Woman: And that's...

Man: A lot of people like distracting (unintelligible).

Woman: Excuse me?

((Crosstalk))

Woman: So ignoring this blatantly inappropriate comment. And I think it's also what I say is, you can see it as part of a broader or piece of an interactive strategy. So for instance one strategy I wanted to bring up, is for non-traditional stakeholders, again some of the smaller stakeholders, the small farmers, the homesteaders, there are venues that are very specific to those communities.

So there's the Mother Earth News Fair, there's different publications. And if you can develop relationships, so again pick the target, you know pick ten, whatever the resources are to build the relationship, and then those groups also very often have large social media followings and they have people that network out from NAHM.

So if you develop the relationship with let's say Mother Earth News, and you go to their fairs, first of all there's going to be a lot about, reach to the homesteaders literally at these fairs, and then there's going to be like social media people at those fairs who would then take your stuff and promote it.

Alan Huddleston: That's true, you get other people to do your marketing for you, and that can be very useful. So those are terrific, terrific points, and advice, thank you.
Speaking of webinars, unless anybody had anything else on that thought.

Woman: Yes, I was just going to ask a question, I think you've done a really good job improving your emergency response communication and issues, I mean that is really improved over the past, I don't know, ten years. But the conference calls, you either know to get on a conference call or know you're going to look on the website after the call if you can't get on the call. And then that I know you the same thing, but we've rebroadcast that immediately so all my producers in California should know who we're not reaching are the same ones you're struggling to reach, and those are the no-traditional farmers.

But if you're part of an organization, you will get your message fast because it's rebroadcast so quickly, either industry does it or we do it, usually the farmer's getting it from both, but. We just need to keep working on the non-traditional farmers. I think an extension to them, a great assistance for us getting that message out, you know.

Man: I was just going to say, leveraging that extension opportunity as well. For example, I know that all of our agents in Arkansas are supposed to have a Facebook Page, and they're usually pretty well followed by the local people. So that's 75 agents who will all put stuff about, and you can route that to the state office, you don't have to know (unintelligible), I mean you can just contact the state office, hey we've got this thing, can we get it to your agents? Sure. That's another problem.

Alan Huddleston: It's actually just a nascent effort, but we're just starting now to reach out through USDA's NIFA to work with, to reach out to extension and to get,

because there's an existing extension network that we can tap into and get to be known better there, and really use that.

One of the other things, in terms of emergency, I'm on one of the emergency management response teams that VS has, and I'm the PIO for it, and after the second time I went out, second state I was out for, I learned that the first person I should probably talk to when I land in a county is the extension agent.

That person's going to set up meetings for me, they're going to get me linked to everybody I need to know, and they know some of the things about the local newspapers and who I talk to and who's going to say the right things and who's going to misquote me, so I just found them to be really useful. So I think that is definitely an area where we're looking to develop a stronger network so we can do outreach via the extensions. And I think that extension is one of the ways to start reaching, it's one avenue to get to the non-traditional.

Woman: What are the restrictions, or what are the barriers to different branches of USDA working with each other on some of these outreach. So we're hosting a conference in Texas in, you know, end of September. And FSA has a booth, and last year both FSA and our VS had booths. And you know, I'm like, I'm pretty sure it's not worth VS having its own booth at our conference. But what are the barriers to you all working with multiple agencies that would all be trying to reach these non-traditional stakeholder groups? And sort of sharing some of these duties?

Alan Huddleston: That's a good question, and I don't believe there's a legal barrier. And I don't, it might, you might want to say it's an institutional/resource barrier. (Anita)'s already used the word, has already used the word silo. So it's pretty easy if

you're going to the state fair to think I need to have my booth, and when you get there, find out that there is the FSA booth just, you know, down the aisle from you.

So that, I do think building those bridges with other USDA agencies is, as well as and of course state, is another huge area to get into, and breaking down some of those fake barriers, I would say. Because they're not there, they haven't been placed there by anybody intentionally, like legally, Congress doesn't mandate that we can't interact with FIS for outreach. So we can. We can.

Woman: What about outreach to consumers? Then on all the lists and, I have found that, like I get recall notices and then I forward them to my friends with gluten allergies or egg allergies, and then they sign up for the messages, because they're like wow, these are really useful. I find that a lot of consumers, people who aren't in agriculture seems to be the least familiar with USDA's messages, so outreach is through grocery chains for the kinds of messages and the kinds of information that USDA provides that are also, every once a while I see stuff from grocery stores, but not much.

Alan Huddleston: It's true and it's hard for me right, just off the top of my head to picture reaching out to the general consumer because when I think of it, I think of our industry groups who do such good outreach to the consumer about safety of products. Nutritional qualities of products, that type of approach.

So I would have to think through that one a little bit more and if anybody has some thoughts on that, with consumer and the approach to the consumer who's non-agriculture, non-medicine. That would be, I'd certainly be interested in hearing what you have to think about that.

So, unfortunately our webinar friend, we'll have time, but I am curious what has, because it would be terrific if we could have many, many meetings like this, correct? With bigger audiences, where more people could come and directly interact with representatives from the communities. And unfortunately with budget realities we just can't. And so distance outreach or virtual outreach is becoming much more common.

So yes, social media's one of the ways of doing that. And we've discussed that a bit, but webinars is something that we've leaned on quite a bit, we definitely lean on it for training internally with our folks and also to our state partners.

But I would be curious what works in webinars and what doesn't. I can definitely appreciate - I've sat on those, where you have a screen of nothing but text, and somebody's reading it to you in a monotone, and how dreadful that can be. So does anybody have examples of webinars they've been on that have been interactive, engaging, that you walked away from, that you said I remember at least five really important things from that. And that was a good hour of my time.

Man: The early ones on, the early webinars on the high path flu, when it hit and what it did in turkeys and chickens and different things, and, you know, when the southeast regional poultry lab presented their findings and all this, was very helpful, and a good way to communicate that type of information.

Man: One technique I've seen in webinars, actually kind of interesting, it's a dairy webinar, held kind of on a monthly basis. They'll actually have little quizzes embedded, and then we'll give the statistics on how people answer various questions, so it does feel that you're really engaged in that at times, and actually you can help re, I guess put re-emphasize some of the key points that

you want them to take home from that webinar. So that could be a technique to use.

Woman: Yes, I participate in the monthly CDC demotic disease calls. And their webinar-based, and they usually have three or four small topics that go ten to 15 minutes, and at the end of each there's a text and/or a call-in, answer period. And they will, at the end, they'll make on their website resources available. Somebody will ask a question and they'll say well, that can be found in the following publication, and then afterwards they'll post that.

But topics are short enough, and there's a moderator who will sometimes ask a question or two, and people call in for those questions. And they have a pretty loyal group that gets on, you often hear the same people calling in with questions.

((Crosstalk))

Alan Huddleston: Go ahead.

((Crosstalk))

Alan Huddleston: So you, you kind of circled me back to something that we were discussing earlier. I hate to almost bring this up again, but Diane and I were part of an evaluation of our program about a year ago, and something that came out of it was when we were talking about outreach, there was some comments from out in the states that we were relying too much on more 21st century outreach solutions than, or we were focusing on them maybe a little bit more and ignoring some more traditional written materials.

And so they were saying if I had something I could throw in the back of my truck that was more written materials that I could give to people who don't have the Internet, who don't look online, never would attend a webinar, then that would be very useful, so that would be something of casting a wider net.

And I've thought through that, about that could be useful in terms of especially having materials that are not just in English, so that we can reach other communities, especially with minor, small fact sheets and other types of, maybe even just printed Power Point presentations to reach those much tougher to reach audiences that we're not going to get to with our webinars, our website, with social media.

Woman: I have a very naïve question, when you have the VMOs out in the field, whether they're state or federal VMOs, do they have an outreach mission in addition to their regulatory mission?

Woman: I was going to say, we used to have these brand new, really cool little cards with a picture on one side, with like one image and what young people like today, and a couple points on the other. But yes, I think they've...

Alan Huddleston: Yes, yes. I would say we do try to emphasize that, they really are the first point of contact. And so trying to be the messenger and many of them or I won't even say many, I will say all but a very small, small minority, who I've talked to take great pride in that role of being that point of contact for USDA and state people I've talked to from the field as well, of being that person and I'm the messenger for my representing my group.

Woman: And bringing those last two points together, you know, would there be, I mean, what I'm wondering is would there be, you know, a trifold that basically sums up here's what VS can do for you. Bullet point, bullet point,

bullet point, you know, plain language, absolute basics of what VS does, how do you reach them, whether they step in, you know, sort of the, that the VMOs have that can be put out at tables, that FSA has a table at the state fair you could have a stack of trifolds about what VS does, that you know, you could just, it could be disseminated in so many different ways to reach you know the folks who aren't online and also who let's say aren't motivated.

I mean, someone may or may not be motivated enough to come listen for an hour on these topics, but here's this piece that tells them, like, oh, so if X, Y and Z happened, these are the go-to guys.

Alan Huddleston: Yes, exactly, there is somebody who will respond.

Woman: Yes.

Alan Huddleston: And this is why, and this is who they are. So my colleagues, correct me if I'm wrong, I can't off the top of my head picture a nice, glossy trifold that says this is what VS does for you. This is who we are, and this is what we can do for you. I know there's something that kind of exists for APHIS. But, and it's old. But yes. So that's a brilliant idea, I'm going to take that to LPA, because I think they'll love that.

Woman: ...all my stuff in too many words.

((Crosstalk))

Alan Huddleston: Perfect.

Man: I can, you know somebody like that.

Alan Huddleston: I love it.

((Crosstalk))

Alan Huddleston: Yes, it looks very cool.

Woman: I was going to say, what I was going to say was that generational change and I'm sure that you're going through it on your staff, but for our field staff we used to have a lot of program diseases, which gave them a good reason to interact with producers. And when they interacted, say they're doing Bruce Willis', whatever, collecting milk samples they would then discuss, you know, about security or whatever else.

But the problem is we aren't very effective in eliminating those diseases, which is a good problem but so there's less of what our field staff say, you've probably heard it, unless there's a reason or an excuse to be out interacting with the producers. And once we move that interaction we lose that bridge to trust, we lose that communication channel when everything else, so it's a, we're trying to hire our older staff are struggling more, because they're used to having a list of stuff they're going to do, which given the reason and who they're going to talk to.

So we're trying to really refocus all on what agriculture looks like today, and what kind of interactions there would be and what our program should look like, just like you guys are doing, the exact same.

So it's a, think part of the problem is that at the top you guys might be seeing it and you're strategy's changing, and you're realigning to where agriculture is today. But it takes time for that to trickle out into the field.

Alan Huddleston: It does, it does. And you've touched on something that I think, I know I've heard feedback on as well. Is that with the success of so many of our eradication programs, people are struggling to find a way to go communicate, and so I know at least in the scrapie program we've talked with them about strategies they can use.

Just saying, for those of you who might not be familiar with this. In the scrapie program you can submit an actual, you can remove a sheep or goat head and send it to a collection facility that we have in Indiana. And so we try to get our field VMOs and AHTs, animal health technicians to drive around with those boxes in their truck, and just say, if you are driving down the road and you see a sheep farm, stop. Introduce yourself and talk a little bit about the program. And then say 'Hey, by the way, if you had some mysterious death or you something that was euthanized after it looked neurologic or wasting disease, you could remove the head, have it sent to this sampling facility, all free of charge. Just keep this box, I've got one in my truck.

And that's an opportunity for them, so yes, you're right. That is something that we are definitely trying to bridge. That's still a mission, that's still a critical mission and what are the new ways that you can approach them.

Woman: And you may already be doing this, but as you said I dropped my head into my hands envisioning some of people's reactions of having a USDA person showing up on their doorstep, unannounced, uninvited, and unappointed. So there's just got to be a lot of care given. I should also say, like FDA was doing a sampling program, they were going around, they took 1600 samples of raw cheese. And I'm like getting frantic calls from producers who are like, FDA's on my doorstep.

Okay, what are they doing? Well, they're saying they're just taking, yes, here's the sampling program here's what's going on. No, this isn't an inspection, it's not underhanded enforcement. So where you are in that situation, where you are just sort of doing like hi, we're doing meet and greet, you've got to have, and I put it in writing, you've got to have some very clear information on the program that starts with the like, this is not enforcement action, this is not, not surveillance to borrow a statement from your earlier point.

Because otherwise do you see a USDA person shows up on one of my farmer's doorsteps? There's just an immediate sort of like, what are you doing here?

Man: There we go. Yes, situational awareness I think is really important. Like you get a (Nichole), who knows her people and who she can go talk to, you know, who she might have spoken to at a market or at a slaughter plant or event, she knows that she can go knock on their doors but also that she knows locally, you don't knock on that person's door. Because I'm going to pull up in a truck and I don't want to startle them.

Woman: And it doesn't even, and it's not even don't knock on their door, but just

Alan Huddleston: Right, approach it differently.

Woman: Hi, I'm from the USDA is going to be a part that automatically sets them back a moment, and you have to have that very clear message, like in the first 20 seconds of what this is, why they don't need to be nervous, why it is about building a relationship. It just needs to be very quick, very clear, you know, up front.

Alan Huddleston: Agreed, agreed.

Woman: Where are the producers that you represent? Where are they getting the information that they should be scared of the USDA? Where do you think they're getting that from? They're not born with it.

Woman: Because there's plenty of stories where there have been abuses. Check out, you know, there's a book Mad Sheep, and that's just an example of what people have read and told. I mean there have been abuses where small-scale producers are wiped out without a lot of recourse. Now, is that the most common experience? Not necessarily. But it doesn't take the most common experience to breed concern in people who don't have an effective way to counter if they are targeted.

Woman: How do they come across that information?

Woman: They come across it at homesteading fairs, they come across it when they Google backyard farming, they come across it at, you know, these same places. It's, they come across it on social media, they come across it on all of these decentralized venues.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Yes, the USDA needs to be on the site, and they need to respect that that is the starting point and that, and I do want to say, what I was saying earlier, you know, agree or disagree, I wasn't attempting to say that my folks don't have a reason for concern, I mean, there has to be a respect as to why that concern is there. And the idea that it's a bi, the word partnership's been used a lot here, and when it is approached and when the message is effective that there is a

partnership and therefore there is bilateral communication happening, you will see a shift.

Alan Huddleston: So with that, so I think we've covered some of our more traditional routes. I would like some suggestions from folks around the table of reaching communities that we do not traditionally reach, aside from, we've talked about extension as definitely one way that we can do that.

We've talked a little bit about written materials, having them in languages other than English. But I would be really curious to hear thoughts on how we could reach other communities that we don't, the small producer. I know that Diane and I will particularly appreciate hearing anything as our sector has many, many small producers that we would love to be able to reach out to. Should we pass you around to the one that works?

((Crosstalk))

Woman: You're quick. So I did have a comment for the non-traditional. Where I come from, the means of communication with our tribal members is radio. And radio would be bilingual, all of the discussion about Internet and all of that access we do not have. So it would be radio, and then the idea of printing massive amounts of paper is not very functional. So a lot of our livestock producers are elderly, and so they do listen to the radio.

So the messaging would be bilingual and that would be a way to get across to all ages. The youth, the younger adults plus the elderly that are the primary caretakers of the livestock.

Woman: We found that reaching small producers backyard producers, one of the most effective ways is through the feed stores. So for the poultry, backyard poultry

producers in our state, we printed a two-Page, basically a postcard and put it in every feed store in the state, and it was printed well and distributed well (unintelligible) high path AI event, and it turned out that a lot of the poultry producers actually saved that. They picked it up, took it and during the high path AI breakout, the state got lots of phone calls about sick birds from backyard people and was able to follow up on them. So that seemed to be really effective and was a single targeted effort.

Alan Huddleston: Yes, well hopefully (Vanna). Let us know.

Man: Well, let me tell you. I think a lot of small producers are afraid to go to the FSA offices. In my case, I have to tell you, it took me about 30 years to be (unintelligible) in my community for be the only foreigner around several thousand miles. And many of them today as you know, they've been mistreat when they go to the office, they cannot understand them or many other reasons.

That's the reason it's been, Mr. (Bill Tackey) has been, settled many lawsuits with them for not getting the proper service. As you know, today, you know the small producer's got a tool to ask for the receipt of service. You guys know that? Did you know that when you go to the FSA office, they will give you a receipt of service? Nobody knows that.

But you know, for that reason, you know, that the minorities or different groups, they don't get the proper service, that's what happened. And if you want to reach them, you need to go to them. They are not going to come to the FSA office, you guys try to reach them, you know.

Alan Huddleston: Thank you, I think that reinforces two different things that we talked about, two really important points. And one is that USDA needs to recognize where

some of these communities are starting from, their starting-off point, and know, and appreciate and respect it and work from that point forward.

I forgot the second point that I thought that I worked with so nicely. Oh, and going to them. I do think that we do need to have a strategy, we do need to develop a strategy that does get us into communities that we don't traditionally get into. And thank you (Glenn) because that's a wonderful idea with the radio, and you can segue that also into Internet radio, and podcasts. So that's, those all come together nicely. And I'll, I think we got some, think we might have some new mics.

Woman: I have one more comment, Alan. This is just to tiptoe around the idea of being respectful of historic events that have happened. Within my tribe there was a time of livestock reduction, and that's when the federal government came in and shot cattle, horses and sheep and put them in a big trench and shot them and buried them. Messaging with my people, you'll have to tiptoe around that discussion, you'll have to make it very specific on why you're there, what you're there for and all of those areas, because we do have history where federal government killed animals.

Alan Huddleston: Thank you, and you just triggered something that I did want to mention, and that is that there, I think with some outreach when we can actually identify somebody from the community that we're trying to reach who can be a spokesperson for us, that's critical. And Glenda you and your team are a perfect example of that.

We have a cooperative agreement with the Navajo nation. And you all have done an excellent job of getting out and messaging that scrapie program, that's the point of that cooperative agreement, but you haven't limited to that, because you're going to specific farms, you also talk about sheep and goat

health with them as well. And so that's a really positive experience for people with trusted partners who are from the community.

Woman: One other source for getting into a local community that we found very helpful is the, if you contact the, not just the extension agent but the local health department because they really know, they've had to deliver so many community health programs, they really know the best way to communicate to their specific community, is it which language, pictograms, is it through some type of church services, some types of, you know it's really different, they've been really helpful to us, just ask them.

Man: I wonder too if there's not a way you can't comb through your (unintelligible).

Man: There's a media that we haven't discussed and that's the ag media. So there seems like there's a, of course there's the farm journal type ag media who I work with closely and I feel like, you know, you can develop a rapport with them, and they usually let you make sure that they're getting the message, they want to create the message, but they'll let you make sure that it's right.

And universities, most land-grant institutions have some kind of a farm radio program, some little snippet of something that they broadcast every day that if you were delivering messages to university extension, they would be happy to send those things on, I'm sure.

Alan Huddleston: Great, thank you, that's a great idea. So we are, we're actually at 4:21, so if I wasn't certain how we were doing with time. I didn't want to, okay.

Woman: They have a little time tomorrow.

Woman: I mean I think, this is one where it's fairly easy. So I sort of combined the first two where we have any specific recommendations regarding the education materials. Actually, that went down. So we have what communication strategy that's been most effective, and we have NAHMS, NAS was mentioned, but I think that's actually VS, can I take NAS off? Going once, going twice. The website, personal involvement of APHIS staff, and then we have what communication strategies could be improved and do we have any specific recommendations, really kind of, we ended up discussing those together.

I'm going to hold this up here, hopefully we can get the screen to stop blinking. Ignoring the occasional grammar error, is there anything up there people think need to be changed or, (unintelligible) blue that's okay too. As long as it isn't black.

Man: I have one other comment from a stakeholder, something about veterinary services ought to have a stats Page for easy reference.

Woman: A what?

Man: A stats Page.

Woman: Oh, stats Page.

Man: Industry statistics.

Woman: What kind of statistics?

Man: This came from the AVMA, so not sure exactly what they were talking about. But we can follow up with that with them if you'd like.

Woman: Yep, sorry.

Man: I don't, I'm not sure what the AVMA was responding to, but I find it hard to find individual people in USDA, right, so if that's what they were talking about, I would agree that, you know, if you're really trying to find somebody with some particular expertise and a name and a phone number, I don't know how you do it.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: Yes, I think the AVMA was, yes. I don't, I'm putting both down, you know as two separate things.

Man: Population?

Woman: Just a short aside, if anybody ever needs scrapie, it's scrapie@aphis.usda.gov.

Woman: I'm not sure which one of these this would fall under, but one of the comments that I was asked to bring was to increase transparency for future regulatory action, through increased use of the advanced notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register for important issues prior to initiating any activity for the rulemaking. If that would be something to make people more comfortable with being actively involved.

Man: Are you saying that by the time the rules are written it's all cast in stone? Maybe?

Woman: Not saying that particularly, but sometimes that's the way it feels. If they don't feel like there's any time to put any input in on a lot of things because it's done before you know about it.

Woman: I'll actually add to that, because I think adding transparency, it's an important piece. And other avenues for getting notice out, you know, so how do we, how do you engage stakeholders early, and early and often? Yikes, this is bad. Yes, this has gotten bad.

((Crosstalk))

Man: So let me try to readdress this, because I'm hearing a couple of things at the same time. When we look at the rulemaking process, as I understand it you make a draft of the rule, put it out for public comment, and then the comments are made and comes back and the final rule gets put together and put forward.

But there needs to be that pre-step before the rule gets made. That's where the collaboration really needs to occur, where you bring in the industry collaboration, where you bring in your partners to be part of the rulemaking process before you ever have to get to the comments stage. Then they feel like they've got some ownership at least in the process.

Even if they don't like the rule, they've done the best they can with the rule. Certainly it takes more time but it also helps to establish that we're not just, we're from the government and we're here to help whether you like it or not is not the way we want to be treated. And so yes...

Woman: That was called the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, isn't that the, I don't know what the acronym is, but prior to initiating any of the activity. Okay.

Alan Huddleston: You are correct. And there are mechanisms for bringing different people in, almost sort of a mechanism that's similar to how the (SACA) was formed,

where people are solicited, participants are solicited to be part of a negotiated rulemaking. I'm sorry to keep talking scrapie, but I'll just go into the scrapie history. In 19, in the '80s, the USDA decided that we were just, we were losing, it was a lost cause, at that point because of the science.

And it was very rarely found at that point. So USDA notified the population, US, that we were going to, we are considering discontinuing the entire scrapie program. And what came back in comments was no, no, no, we don't want it to go away, we just want to have something that's more useful and more producer-friendly. Recognizing the realities of the limitations of the science of the disease as we know it today.

And so a negotiated rulemaking committee was formed, and so, and that was made up of different representatives from industry but also people who were just, small producers could be part of that, as well, and states were part of that and then of course the USDA. And they came up with a proposed rule then that created, then the major part of it was the scrapie flock certification program, that's sort of the voluntary component of the scrapie program that still exists today inside the greater eradication program.

So there are mechanisms for that. So we'll definitely take that to heart. That recommendation.

Woman: And actually, so I'll bring that back to also specific communications, a broader communications issue, which is two-way communications. And I've said it before but I want to emphasize it and I think it goes to this, which is, you know, if you want people to engage with the agency, there needs to be mechanisms for people to feel like they're part of the process.

And so whether that is, you know like on my suggestion of a trifold that has sort of the basic comments line, you know, whatever it is but something so it's not just hi, here's info. But yes, we want to hear from the community also, you know. What are the local points of contact, so that they don't always feel like, because all of them aren't going to call DC. You know, what's the local point of contact, where can we create an ongoing discussion?

Alan Huddleston: Agreed, and I think, on that point I'm going to step away and let you guys take care of your last order of business. But I'm going to go old school on something, and this is only homework if you want it to be homework. If you think of anything, this is old school, you can actually write down a thought, you have a thought or a question about outreach and communication from Veterinary Services, please write it down on this card and bring it in tomorrow so that we can add it to the record, and I can benefit from it by taking it back to my people. So thanks so much for all of your really, really helpful thoughts today, they're really terrific.

Woman: Okay, so we appear to have lost our imaging capability. So I'm going to, yes, I was going to say it's almost time to call it a day. I'm going to hit, sort of go through the last two questions, which I don't think there's anything to add. So there was specifically a question of what communications strategies could be used to improve messaging to state officials, tribal nations, local government, industry producers and non-traditional communities. I think we sort of covered, I mean I think that's sort of inherent in all the rest of what we've said, but does anyone want to add anything? Okay.

How can veterinary services improve collaboration with other agencies. Actually, I can be responsive, I don't have a clue. But does anyone have a more useful comment to make?

Okay. So the action plan on this, I'll clean it up in terms of formatting tonight, and bring it back to final approval in the morning when we can have it up on the screen. Okay. Suppose I should be able to just e-mail it, (unintelligible) e-mail program available.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: While we're working on e-mailing that, I did already e-mail you the copy of the marked up comments on the comprehensive integrated surveillance, and on the emerging disease response plan. Once Liz gets me the cleaned up version, I'll send that out also. But chances are it will not be, it'll be a little later in the evening that you may wish to read it. So if you want to read the rough draft, remember in Word you can go into review and look at the unmarked of it without having to accept the edits, if you want to, you know, be able to read it in a more simple format.

Also, just a reminder that we will be putting out again for nominations for membership in the committee sometime this fall, probably in mid- to late October. We have the process going through to get the notice published, maybe we'll get lucky and it'll get out earlier. But it will probably be mid-October.

Some of you have already had three terms and so won't be able to be reappointed, anyone who hasn't served three terms, we encourage you to put yourselves forward again, we'd like to keep about half the committee over from term to term just so we can maintain stability and you know, history within the committee and bring out about half new people.

I think that, no this is not our last meeting, we're having a meeting tomorrow, I'm just filling time while we're dealing with our IT issue. In terms of serving

on the committee, if we get all of our work done and no pressing issues come up, this may be the last meeting. It's not been definitely decided, but the term officially ends in April, it's unlikely we would do another meeting within this term of the committee.

Unless it's a phone call conference call situation, where we have some urgent pressing matter or if we don't finish the business that we have before us during this meeting here today and tomorrow.

Does anybody else have anything they want to talk about before we close? That we still have officially 27 more minutes left.

Woman: One of the statements, actually not even a statement, we were asked to bring up some issues with tuberculosis eradication, but I want to bring exactly what he requested, we talked about in my hotel room.

So tomorrow. Exactly, that's why I left it there, I thought that was the appropriate time to bring it up. Not anticipating spare time today.

Woman: Actually, I think we did good work today, I appreciate everybody hanging in there and being interactive, and we will look forward to seeing you back here bright and early at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

We don't have any organized plans for dinner tonight, but if anybody wants to put a group together, we can talk about it on the way back to, walking back to the hotel, I would think so. Again, thank you and we will see you in the morning if not before.

Woman: Since I'm officially required to adjourn the meeting, meeting is now adjourned for today and we'll reconvene at 9 o'clock tomorrow. (Unintelligible) ten minutes early so we can be sure of an on-time start.

Thank you very much for your participation today.

Coordinator: Thank you, that concludes today's conference, you may disconnect at this time.

END