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National Veterinary Services Laboratories and Center for Veterinary Biologics:

Working with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

Introduction

At the international level, the Veterinary Services (VS) program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) collaborates extensively with the World Organization for Animal Health. This Paris-based organization changed its name recently but still uses its former acronym—OIE. Currently, 167 OIE member countries work together to collect, analyze, and disseminate information on the distribution and occurrence of animal diseases; to provide expertise and encourage international harmonization in the control of animal diseases; and to safeguard world trade by publishing international standards for the safe movement of animals and animal products.

Within APHIS–VS, four major program areas interact directly with OIE: the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL), the Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB), the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH), and the National Center for Import/Export's (NCIE) Sanitary International Standards Team.

NVSL and CVB—together with the Institute for International Cooperation in Animal Biologics (IICAB)—make up the Collaborating Centre for the Diagnosis of Animal Diseases and Vaccine Evaluation in the Americas.

Collaborating Centre for the Diagnosis of Animal Diseases and Vaccine Evaluation in the Americas

This OIE-recognized Centre is made up of three components—NVSL, CVB, and IICAB. Together, they work to develop a multiyear continuing-education effort for U.S. veterinarians, personnel at State veterinary diagnostic laboratories, and U.S. and international biologics regulators and manufacturers. In the event of an exotic animal disease outbreak, this additional training better prepares these individuals to diagnose and respond to the disease. It also prepares the United States to safely trade veterinary vaccines and other biologics needed for disease response and control worldwide.

National Veterinary Services Laboratories: An OIE Reference Laboratory

NVSL—a full-service veterinary diagnostic laboratory—is recognized by OIE as an international reference laboratory for specific animal diseases of importance to the Americas. These include high-pathogenicity avian influenza, anthrax, pseudorabies, bluetongue, contagious equine metritis, equine encephalomyelitis (eastern, western, and Venezuelan), equine infectious anemia, leptospirosis, Newcastle disease, vesicular stomatitis, and West Nile encephalitis.

NVSL supports OIE by:

- Providing diagnostic assistance,
- Supplying reference reagents to other laboratories,
- Evaluating diagnostic reagents used by other countries,
- Consulting on a wide range of techniques, and
- Conducting developmental projects to improve diagnostic techniques for diseases of significance to the Americas.

Center for Veterinary Biologics

CVB is the sole confirmatory and investigatory testing laboratory involved in regulation of commercial veterinary biologics (vaccines and diagnostic kits) in the United States.

CVB supports OIE by:

- Developing, distributing, and using worldwide standard protocols for biologics evaluation and training scientists throughout the world on these protocols;
- Validating and providing standard reagents to biologics manufacturers and regulatory laboratories worldwide;
- Conducting developmental projects to improve biological techniques for diseases of significance in the Americas;
- Reviewing, developing, comparing, and harmonizing testing protocols in collaboration with industry and other governmental laboratories;
- Actively participating in international harmonization initiatives aimed at improving standards and testing procedures for veterinary biologics; and
- Hosting scientific meetings in the area of veterinary biologics.

Institute for International Cooperation in Animal Biologics

This institute, based at Iowa State University, concentrates on educational efforts and facilitating international communication and harmonization related to the availability, safety, and efficacy of veterinary biologics.

Specifically, IICAB:

- Offers training on scientific principles behind vaccine safety and efficacy;
- Works with other international organizations to harmonize regulations regarding veterinary biologics in the Americas;
- Helps developing countries obtain veterinary biologics for specific unmet needs and helps in their efforts to manufacture, import, and regulate veterinary biologics and diagnostics; and
- Organizes scientific meetings and serves as an international resource for information on the use of veterinary biologics.

The Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health: An OIE Collaborating Centre

As the OIE Collaborating Centre for Animal Disease Information Systems and Risk Analysis, CEAH shares their risk analysis and disease-surveillance expertise with other OIE member countries. CEAH personnel provide them with technical assistance and expert advice on disease surveillance and control along with risk analysis.

The National Center for Import/Export's Sanitary International Standards Team

VS' NCIE plays an important role in APHIS' mission of protecting American agriculture. The Center's Sanitary International Standards Team is in charge of several critical tasks: facilitating international trade, monitoring the health of animals presented at the border for importation, and regulating the import and export of animals, animal products, and biologics.