

## Exercising to Improve



Employees with APHIS' National Veterinary Stockpile (NVS)—in coordination with the agency's Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory—conducted a tabletop exercise for foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) vaccine shipments.

The exercise held in June at Plum Island, NY, brought together the many players that would be involved in responding with emergency shipments of FMD vaccine if needed. Other participants included Veterinary Services' Interagency Coordination staff, the Center for Veterinary Biologics, and Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services—along with officials from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and representatives from the North American FMD Vaccine Bank (NAFMDVB) and Merial Animal Health Limited.

The event was the first exercise involving this many participants to review NVS' logistics role in NAFMDVB vaccine movement. Among other things, the exercise helped review operating procedures, shipment responsibilities, and agency roles and responsibilities. It also aided in efforts to enhance collaboration between the participating organizations and countries.

The exercise was designed to examine each phase of FMD vaccine movement.

- NAFMDVB activation through the shipment of vaccine antigen concentrate (VAC) to a manufacturer
- Arrival of VAC at a manufacturer through the vaccine's departure from the manufacturer
- Arrival of vaccine in the United States
- Arrival of vaccine in Canada
- Arrival of vaccine in Mexico

The exercise's design provided participants the opportunity to analyze the communication, shipping, and coordination requirements during each phase of FMD vaccine movement.

The NVS and NAFMDVB plan to use the lessons learned to update the *NVS Deployment Plan* and *NAFMDVB Guidelines*; identify potential modifications for vaccine contracts; and validate/update the standard operating procedures for other vaccine shipments.

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