



Diagnostic Center of Population and Animal Health,  
Lansing, MI

### Information Technology Plays Its Part

Information technology systems support the NAHLN vision by providing electronic interconnectivity between diagnostic-sample collectors, NAHLN laboratories, and national databases. By utilizing data and messaging standards established by veterinary medical and public-health agencies, accurate and consistent diagnostic information is quickly and securely transmitted, aggregated, and available for decisionmakers and analysts.

### Train the Trainer

A “train the trainer” program has been developed by NVSL and implemented to increase the number of laboratories with personnel trained to conduct the assays for diagnosing AI, END, CSF and FMD. This program not only has increased the number of laboratory personnel prepared to respond to a national animal-health emergency but has also provided the United States with a cadre of trainers available to teach others when needed. The successful implementation of this program is a significant step for the NAHLN in achieving its goals of sufficient diagnostic capability and capacity to address an animal-health emergency.



Purdue University Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory,  
West Lafayette, IN

### Contact Information

USDA–APHIS–Veterinary Services–NVSL  
1920 Dayton Avenue (packages)  
P.O. Box 844 (letters)  
Ames, IA 50010  
Fax: (515) 337-7397  
Phone: (515) 337-7266

USDA–APHIS–Veterinary Services  
NVSL–Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic  
Laboratory  
40550 Route 25 (packages)  
Orient Point, NY 11957  
P.O. Box 848 (letters)  
Greenport, NY 11944-0848  
Fax: (631) 323-3366  
Phone: (631) 323-3256

NAHLN E-mail address: [nahln@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:nahln@aphis.usda.gov)  
NAHLN Web site: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/nahln](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/nahln)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

*Photo credits:* All the photographs in this leaflet were provided by APHIS cooperators from the State and university sector and are reproduced by permission. Sources are given below each image in the text. The cover photo was supplied by the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, Pullman, WA.

Issued June 2006  
Slightly revised October 2007



U.S. Department of Agriculture

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Program Aid No. 1878

## National Animal Health Laboratory Network:

Enhancing Early Detection



### Vision Statement

The NAHLN is the nationwide model for effective diagnostic networks that respond quickly and efficiently and communicate diagnostic outcomes to decisionmakers. The NAHLN is organized and supported so that it has the capacity to respond to animal-disease outbreaks nationwide.



## Introduction

When a large-scale animal-disease outbreak occurs, tracking its progress and performing diagnostic tests on thousands of diagnostic samples is a big challenge. To get the job done, it is very important that all the parties involved—Federal agencies and laboratories managed by State governments and universities—communicate and collaborate effectively. The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) now forms part of a nationwide strategy to coordinate the work of all organizations providing surveillance and testing services.



Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, Pullman, WA



Ohio Department of Agriculture, Reynoldsburg, OH

## The Roles of NAHLN Cooperators

At the Federal level, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) serves as the national veterinary diagnostic reference and confirmatory laboratory. NVSL coordinates activities, participates in methods validation, and provides training, proficiency testing, assistance, materials, and prototypes for diagnostic tests.

The State/university laboratories in the NAHLN perform routine diagnostic tests for endemic animal diseases as well as targeted surveillance and response testing for foreign animal diseases. State/university laboratories also participate in the development of new assay methodologies.



Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, St. Paul, MN

Networking these resources provides an extensive infrastructure of facilities, equipment, and personnel that are geographically accessible no matter where disease strikes. The laboratories have the capability and capacity to conduct nationwide surveillance testing for the early detection of an animal disease outbreak. They are able to test large numbers of samples rapidly during an outbreak and to demonstrate freedom from disease after eradication.



Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory, Brookings, SD

The NAHLN is a cooperative effort between two USDA agencies—the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)—and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians. It is a multifaceted network comprised of sets of laboratories that focus on different diseases using common testing methods and software platforms to process diagnostic requests and share information.

Personnel in the NAHLN laboratories are approved to conduct screening tests to detect various animal diseases, including avian influenza (AI), exotic Newcastle disease (END), bovine spongiform encephalopathy, chronic wasting disease, scrapie, classical swine fever (CSF), and foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), and vesicular stomatitis.

## Mission Statement

The NAHLN will:

- Provide accessible, timely, accurate, and consistent animal-disease laboratory services nationwide;
- Provide laboratory data to meet epidemiologic and disease-reporting needs;

## The Bigger Picture

The NAHLN also contributes to wider societal goals, such as:

- Protecting human health by decreasing the risk of zoonotic diseases (those that can affect animals and humans),
- Protecting animal health to decrease environmental risk and negative economic impact to producers,
- Protecting the health of domestic and wild animals by lessening the risk of disease transmission between wildlife and livestock,
- Increasing consumer confidence in the Nation's food supply, and
- Maintaining confidence and positive relationships among global trading partners.

Key elements of the NAHLN system include increased and more flexible capacity for laboratory



Kissimmee Diagnostic Laboratory, Kissimmee, FL

- Maintain the capacity and capability to provide laboratory services in support of responses to foreign animal-disease outbreaks or other adverse animal-health events; and
- Focus on diseases of livestock (exotic, zoonotic, and emerging diseases), while including diseases of nonlivestock species.