



**Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection Service**

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# Remarks

## **Talking Points as Prepared for Associate Administrator Jere Dick Leadership Idaho Agriculture**

WASHINGTON, DC, Apr. 13, 2015—So far this year, the United States has experienced multiple outbreaks of three strains of HPAI: H5N2, H5N8, and the novel H5N1. We have findings in wild birds and captive wild birds in 10 States, as well as backyard chicken flocks and commercial turkey flocks in a number of States. The H5N2 strain in commercial turkey flocks is predominant right now. Three premises in Idaho were affected earlier this year.

At least 30 countries have placed various types of restrictions on U.S. poultry exports. USDA is actively working with trading partners, the poultry industry, trade associations, and other stakeholders to reduce or eliminate unjustified trade restrictions and mitigate the impact of these detections on exports.

The United States has the strongest AI surveillance program in the world, actively looking for the disease and providing affected producers with 100 percent compensation to encourage reporting. With H5 avian influenza strains currently circulating in migratory birds, we anticipate our active surveillance will result in additional findings.

USDA continues to report findings to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and is coordinating closely on avian influenza surveillance, reporting, and control efforts with its State partners, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

When HPAI outbreaks are confirmed, USDA and its State partners take immediate action to quarantine the affected premises and the surrounding areas to prevent disease spread. All birds on affected premises are depopulated, and we establish control and surveillance zones in accordance with USDA response plans. In the case of the recent outbreaks in Idaho, our Agency's Animal Care program, which enforces the Animal Welfare Act, contacted all exhibitors in the State to provide information about the situation. No human cases of these viruses have been detected.

### ***Trade***

APHIS plays a vital role in ensuring the free flow of agricultural trade by keeping U.S. agricultural commodities/products free from pests and diseases; certifying that U.S. agricultural and food products shipped to markets abroad meet the importing countries' entry requirements; and ensuring that agricultural products imported from abroad meet the Agency's entry requirements to exclude pests and diseases of agriculture.

APHIS also keeps export markets open for American agricultural products by working to eliminate unjustified barriers to trade that involve plant and animal health.

I understand that agricultural commodities represented about 21 percent of Idaho's total exports last year, and that your top agricultural exports include wheat and wheat products, dairy products, vegetables, beef, and veal. Hay, various seeds, apples, and obviously potatoes also figure prominently in the State's trade portfolio.

You also export significant numbers of cattle abroad: Idaho producers shipped nearly 1,650 animals to Jordan in March 2014; almost 5,000 animals to Russia throughout the year; nearly 400 animals to Sudan in November 2014; and more than 630 animals to Mexico during 2014.

APHIS played a pivotal role in a major bilateral agreement concluded in May 2014 that expands market access for U.S. potato exports to Mexico beyond the 26-kilometer border zone previously approved.

Regrettably, that agreement cannot currently be implemented due to eight lawsuits filed by the Mexican potato industry. U.S. potato imports currently remain restricted to within the 26-kilometer border zone.

Although this is now an internal Mexican legal issue, USDA will continue to assist in whatever ways possible to help resolve this matter.

### ***Cooperative Agreements***

APHIS has numerous cooperative agreements with Idaho that support the health of your State's agriculture.

On the plant side, these agreements support annual pest surveys and general surveillance trapping, which focus on early pest detection and so help support Idaho's growing export markets. APHIS provides funding, training, and some supplies for the statewide surveys, which are conducted by State staff.

Recent surveys covered corn, small grain, potatoes, and grapes, along with surveys for pests such as European gypsy moth and the wheat disease Karnal bunt.

On the animal side, APHIS routinely provides Federal funding to ISDA through cooperative agreements for the Animal Health National Surveillance and Response program, which supports surveillance and diagnostic testing of cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry, as well as outreach, education, and preparedness and response for disease issues.

We are also helping to fund a number of animal disease traceability activities, such as providing eartags, as well as increasing the number of electronic records available, supporting interstate movement activities, and more. These cooperative efforts, using some of the latest technology available, enable us to expedite the processing of animals

and optimize our tracing activities. In the event of an animal disease occurrence, we can then share information quickly and effectively with our State and industry counterparts, minimizing impacts to the fullest extent possible.

In addition, we provide critical training. Last year, we conducted foreign animal disease diagnostician response training and contributed our expertise to a “stop animal movement” tabletop exercise sponsored by the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security and ISDA. That exercise focused on protocols for issuing emergency “stop animal movement” and quarantine orders in the case of an animal health emergency.

### ***Wolf Depredation/Feral Swine Damage Management***

APHIS also works with Idaho on a broad range of wildlife management issues, including damage caused by predators such as coyotes and wolves. We have provided assistance to more than 3,200 Idaho property owners/managers over the past 10 years.

USDA has consulted and cooperated with Federal and State wolf management agencies for many decades to support wolf recovery, while addressing the negative impacts that expanding wolf populations can have on livestock and other animals.

In August 2014, we entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and the Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board that outlines a general approach to managing wolf depredation involving livestock and wild ungulate populations, such as elk—both longstanding concerns in the State.

This work involves managing wolf populations in the Lolo zone, where IDFG is using a combination of limits on elk hunting, habitat management, and predator management to aid in the recovery of elk populations.

All of this work is conducted in compliance with Federal and State wolf management plans, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

While assisting IDFG with wolf depredation management, APHIS’ work in Idaho will also ensure the continued existence of healthy wolf populations throughout the State. APHIS has also been closely involved in removing a small population of feral swine in southwest Idaho.

### ***Brucellosis/Scrapie***

APHIS continues to work with ISDA on cooperative State/Federal disease eradication programs such as brucellosis, tuberculosis, and scrapie.

Brucellosis is a long-standing issue in the Greater Yellowstone Area due to the wildlife reservoir there. APHIS conducts increased brucellosis surveillance in a Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) in eastern Idaho. Two herds in the DSA, one cattle and one

bison, are currently under quarantine for brucellosis and their herd plans are being implemented.

In October 2014, scrapie was detected in a flock of Idaho sheep, which was placed under quarantine. Infected and genetically susceptible sheep were removed from the flock, and Federal indemnity was paid.

***Pale Cyst Nematode Program***

APHIS, ISDA, and the potato industry have worked to keep the pale cyst nematode from spreading to other potato-producing areas in Idaho.

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