



**Animal and Plant
Health Inspection Service**

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Remarks

**Remarks as Prepared for Administrator Kevin Shea
United States Animal Health Association (USAHA)/
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD)
President's Dinner**

PROVIDENCE, RI, Oct. 25, 2015— Good evening. It's my honor to join you again this year to present our annual APHIS Administrator's Award.

Since 1977, we at APHIS have presented 38 Administrator's Awards to people who have made consistent, significant contributions toward improving the health of U.S. animal agriculture. And every time we give an award, I hope you know that we are also expressing our appreciation for all of you and everything you do to promote animal health.

USDA and USAHA have been partners in one way or another for more than a century, with the later addition of AAVLD. This partnership between the Federal Government and the animal health community has always been vital to the health and well-being of American agriculture—and never more so than in the past year.

Together, we faced the worst animal disease outbreak in our history. Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) ravaged poultry flocks from the West Coast to the Midwest. It took the outstanding skill, science, leadership, and perseverance of the animal health community to get us through those terrible months when every day seemed to bring word of yet another infected flock.

We learned a lot about what worked and what didn't. And we have acted on that hard-earned knowledge. Although we're not out of the woods yet, by any means, our work together has prepared us infinitely better for any recurrence that may come. So tonight, I want to express APHIS' gratitude for the collaborations that made this year's HPAI response possible.

And in this context, I'm pleased to present APHIS' Administrator's Award to one of our partners in the response.

He is Dr. Dustin Oedekoven, South Dakota's State Veterinarian.

Starting in March of this year, Dustin and his staff had to deal with HPAI outbreaks on the premises of nine turkey producers and one table egg layer producer. From the start, Dustin coordinated swiftly and effectively with us. He ensured that local APHIS employees were included on his staff's response and surveillance teams, and that Dr. Lynn Tesar, the Assistant Director of our Veterinary Services' Surveillance,

Preparedness, and Response Services in South Dakota, was included in the State's Incident Command structure.

We are grateful for that cooperation. But I also have to say that South Dakota was more than ready for this outbreak. Building on his excellent record of planning and preparing for animal health emergencies across a number of animal industries—cattle, dairy, swine, and of course poultry—Dustin and his team were fully prepared to deal with the situation as it unfolded.

Let me give you some examples.

Based on arrangements he already had in place with local fire departments, Dustin didn't have to wait for any equipment to come from elsewhere when HPAI struck. He and his staff were able to quickly depopulate the nine affected turkey farms using State and local equipment, with minimal assistance from us. And when he asked our Incident Management Team to help oversee depopulation at the layer farm, his well-trained staff were still carrying out all the on-farm activities and providing guidance and expertise.

Because Dustin and his staff had met with producers to identify and approve onsite disposal options before HPAI ever reached his State, the carcasses of depopulated birds could be disposed of directly on the affected premises. So, affected South Dakota producers were able to manage most carcass disposal, as well as cleaning and disinfection, operations on their own. In a situation that ultimately involved depopulating more than 1.7 million birds, Dustin's foresight was invaluable in saving precious time and preventing disease spread.

But this is just one of the many ways in which Dustin has admirably served his home State and the health of its animals.

Dustin grew up on a ranch near Sturgis, South Dakota. He received a bachelor's degree in animal science from South Dakota State University (SDSU) in 1998, and his DVM from Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine in 2002.

After working at an equine referral hospital in Sheridan, Wyoming, he returned to his home State in 2003 to serve as a staff veterinarian with South Dakota's Animal Industry Board. By 2006, he had become assistant State Veterinarian, and only 3 years later, in 2009, he was named State Veterinarian and Executive Secretary for the Board, which has broad responsibilities for South Dakota's many animal industries, from animal health and imports to inhumane treatment laws.

Dustin is a joiner and a doer. Throughout his life, he's been an active member of numerous professional, public, student, and community organizations. To name a few, he serves on the United States Animal Health Association's Board of Directors and as the Chair for the Committee on Tuberculosis. He also serves on the SDSU Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory Advisory Board. And from 2010-2013, he was on APHIS' National Animal Health Laboratory Network Coordinating Council, where he was instrumental in

strategic planning for restructuring the network—something that will be implemented in 2016.

In 2011 he was awarded the SDSU Distinguished Young Alumni award and received the South Dakota Veterinary Medical Association's Emerging Leader award in 2013. In 2015, he became a Diplomate in the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine.

You can even hear him on Youtube, telling people how to deal with vesicular stomatitis.

Dustin is very active in his State, in his community, and on behalf of U.S. agriculture as a whole. That's important, because we need many others like him overseeing the health of our herds and flocks.

Dustin, we're grateful for your service and for your invaluable contributions this year to ensuring the continued strength and vitality of our poultry industry. We all thank you.

Please come and receive your well-deserved award.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Dustin Oedekoven: winner of the 2015 APHIS Administrator's Award.

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