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1. [Home](#)
2. Print
3. Pdf
4. Node
5. Entity Print

NAHLN Celebrates 20 Years of Excellence in Safeguarding Animal Health

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The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is recognizing the 20-year anniversary of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN). The NAHLN and USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) are celebrating 20 years of partnering with the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) and 42 states to protect American animal agriculture by providing animal health diagnostic testing for detecting biological threats to the nation's food animals, thus protecting animal health, public health, and the nation's food supply.

USDA created the NAHLN in 2002 to respond to animal health emergencies quickly and efficiently, and effectively communicate diagnostic outcomes to decision makers. The NAHLN is a partnership between USDA APHIS, USDA NIFA and the AAVLD.

The NAHLN's mission is to provide accessible, timely, accurate, and consistent animal disease laboratory services nationwide in response to foreign animal disease outbreaks or other adverse animal health events. While the NAHLN's primary focus

is on exotic, zoonotic, and emerging diseases of livestock, diseases of non-livestock species such as cervids are also under the NAHLN's scope.

Some of the NAHLN's key accomplishments over the past 20 years include:

- Responding to 16 animal disease outbreaks since its inception in 2002, including the two largest animal disease outbreaks in U.S. history: highly pathogenic avian influenza in 2015 and 2022.
- Providing testing support for the 2020-2021 SARS-CoV-2 pandemic response and testing almost 6 million human samples.
- Testing, since 2009, an average of 175,000 samples annually, or over 1.9 million surveillance samples total, for foreign or reportable animal diseases such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, classical swine fever, African swine fever, foot-and-mouth disease, pseudorabies, scrapie, and avian influenza, allowing the free flow of trade.
- Training more than 850 laboratory personnel in quality management principles to ensure standardized testing across the network.

Beginning today, the NAHLN will launch a tab on its website to share a series of visual timelines walking through the network's history and important milestones. There will also be video clips from several of NAHLN's stakeholders describing the role of the network in safeguarding U.S. agriculture. In the coming weeks, APHIS will share history highlights on its social media accounts.