



## Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

### NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK

# NAHLN Quality Management

**T**he National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratories participate in a variety of emergency preparedness and response efforts, including surveillance to detect foreign animal diseases, testing during an animal disease outbreak, and testing throughout recovery from an outbreak. As a result, there must be a high degree of confidence in the quality of the laboratories and their test results.

## Requirements

All NAHLN laboratories must have a quality management system in place. They may demonstrate that they meet this requirement through accreditation by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) or by an accrediting body that meets the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)/International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17025 standard. If a laboratory is not accredited, then other requirements apply. The laboratory must have a quality management system consistent with the AAVLD or OIE/ISO 17025 standard, be willing to participate in site visits by NAHLN and NVSL auditors every 3 years, and be approved by USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL).

The NAHLN program office provides the laboratory an audit report identifying strengths, recommended improvements, and non-conformances. If an audit finds that the quality management system is unacceptable, the laboratory may be removed from the network. To have NAHLN status reinstated, the laboratory must respond to all non-conformances in the audit report and include documentation showing that the issues have been resolved.

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## Training

To help laboratories meet the requirements and to improve quality management systems throughout the network, NAHLN's leadership collaborated with AAVLD's accreditation committee and the NVSL quality team to create a Quality Management System training course. This interactive class covers a variety of quality management topics, including: document control, records management, internal auditing, equipment maintenance, corrective actions, and root cause analysis. Hands-on activities and a mock laboratory audit allow students to apply their new skills and knowledge on a practical level. Since its development in 2010, this training course has expanded beyond its initial audience of NAHLN laboratories and now includes international participants as well.

## National Animal Health Laboratory Network

NAHLN, a State and Federal partnership to safeguard animal health

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This publication supersedes APHIS 91-95-010, "NAHLN Quality Management Systems Training," which was published in October 2011.