



## Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK

# Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies

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## Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has conducted surveillance for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) since 1990. After the December 2003 detection of BSE in an imported cow, USDA began an enhanced BSE surveillance program to more accurately determine how prevalent this disease was in the United States.

USDA concluded that the prevalence of BSE in our country is extremely low, less than one case per million adult cattle. In 2006, we modified the surveillance program to test for BSE at a level more in line with our extremely low risk. This ongoing surveillance tests for BSE at a level 10 times higher than the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) recommendations. In 2013, OIE granted the United States “negligible risk” status for BSE. This classification demonstrates OIE’s belief that our surveillance for BSE and safeguards against the disease are strong. It has also helped increase exports of U.S. beef and beef products.

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) has provided BSE surveillance testing since 2004. The NAHLN laboratories continue to handle surveillance testing for approximately 40,000 animals each year. The National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) perform confirmatory testing for BSE if any potential positive results are found.

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## Chronic Wasting Disease

In 2001, USDA started work on a program to prevent and control CWD in farmed/captive cervids and support States and Tribes with CWD surveillance in wild deer, elk, and moose. NAHLN laboratories also began offering ongoing surveillance to identify CWD-positive animals and followup testing for animals known or thought to be exposed to infected animals and affected herds. In 2014, USDA finalized a 2012 interim rule establishing a voluntary CWD Herd Certification Program. NAHLN laboratories continue to provide testing for farms that meet the requirements of this program. NVSL performs confirmatory testing.

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## Scrapie

USDA began an accelerated National Scrapie Eradication Program in 2001 to eradicate the disease from U.S. sheep and goat populations. Since 2003, scrapie surveillance has primarily targeted sheep and goat populations that are more likely to be infected with scrapie based on age and breed. Other groups targeted for surveillance are scrapie-exposed and potentially exposed sheep and goats that are found through disease investigations and voluntary on-farm testing for USDA's Scrapie Free Flock Certification Program. NAHLN laboratories provide diagnostic testing for approximately 42,000 animals each year through the eradication program. NVSL performs confirmatory testing.

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## Resources

To learn more, visit the "Animal Health" section of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Web site at [www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth). You can also browse surveillance-related articles in old issues of the NAHLN newsletter at [www.aphis.usda.gov/nahln](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/nahln); click on "NAHLN-Related Publications" and then "Newsletter: The NAHLN Update."

## National Animal Health Laboratory Network

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