



Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Office of the
Administrator

1400 Independence
Avenue SW
Washington, DC
20250

June 12, 2015

Dear Stakeholders:

Right now, hundreds of veterinarians from my Agency are working around the clock to help egg and turkey producers battle a severe outbreak of avian influenza that has affected 50 million of their birds over the last 6 months. I couldn't be more proud of our employees and their admirable work alongside veterinarians from State Departments of Agriculture, producers, and thousands of contractors. Together, they are leading the response so that these vital businesses, and all who depend on them, can get back to work as soon as possible.

Outside of rural America, our Agency and our work may not be very well known. But to our Nation's farmers and ranchers, we are a trusted partner who keeps their plants and animals healthy and marketable. Over the course of our history, we have successfully eradicated livestock scourges, such as screwworm and pseudorabies, and led responses to detections of exotic Newcastle disease, avian influenza, and other diseases so consumers can be confident about our food, and important export markets remain open for producers.

We take the trust placed in us extremely seriously and I assure you that includes being ready to help producers and respond to outbreaks of serious livestock diseases. We have specific plans in place for responding to the most serious threats to livestock, including foot-and-mouth disease. These plans call for our veterinarians to set policies to appropriately and adequately respond to the threat, and lead response teams comprised of State partners, producers, and contractors in carrying out those plans and policies. If needed, we can tap into a large network of food animal veterinarians and veterinary students who are trained and ready to augment our response efforts. We also partner and train with other Federal agencies to ensure we're ready to work with them as part of an all-hands response.

APHIS knows some of the best information to improve our systems comes from real-world experience. Our employees' excellent work in Minnesota, Iowa, and other States is the best evidence we have of the success of our investments in workforce planning, emergency response, and employee training, even as our appropriation has been consistently reduced over the last several years. This will most likely be the most comprehensive response to a livestock disease in our Nation's history. We will carefully assess our efforts, and make sure that we continue to do all we can to build and support our veterinary workforce, which is the finest in the world.

Sincerely,

Kevin Shea

Kevin Shea
APHIS Administrator