



# News for Stakeholders

February 2012

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## APHIS Establishes New “Wet Lab” for Evaluating Fish Diseases and Vaccines

APHIS’ Veterinary Services (VS) program recently established a “wet lab” at the National Centers for Animal Health (NCAH) complex in Ames, Iowa to assess the threat of emerging fish diseases, generate reagents, and evaluate aquaculture vaccines prior to licensing.

The aquaculture lab, which is shared by VS’ National Veterinary Services Laboratories and Center for Veterinary Biologics, began conducting studies in the late fall of 2011. The lab contains four challenge rooms each housing numerous tanks that vary in size and can accommodate both fresh and saltwater fish.





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While some of the tanks look similar to aquariums people have in their homes, others are designed to house larger fish. All of the tanks are custom designed to meet the needs of the different aquatic species, and enable experimental studies to be safely conducted. Appropriate diagnostic samples are collected from fish throughout the study periods. Fish are handled according to approved animal care and use procedures. All effluents from the facility are heat treated. After each experiment is concluded, all tanks and equipment are thoroughly disinfected.





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VS established the “wet lab” to address the increasing need for aquaculture diagnostic services. By evaluating the efficacy of vaccines and studying aquatic pathogens that impact trade and pathogens not known to exist in the United States, VS is helping to protect the health of farmed and wild fish here in the United States.

For more information on VS’ laboratory services and regulation of veterinary biological products, go to:

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/lab\\_info\\_services/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/lab_info_services/)

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/vet\\_biologics/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/vet_biologics/)