NAHLN Steering Committee
Alex Ardans, Bev Byrum, Gene Erickson, Bob Hillman, Bill Hoffman, Barb Martin, Terry McElwain, Tom McKenna, Donal O’Toole, Barb Powers, Willie Reed, Gary Sherman, Bill Wagner, Ron Wilson

IT Representatives
Jay Kammerzell, Jim Case, Steve Weber

Recorder
Jane Longwell

Guests
Jillien Allen, Joan Arnoldi, Barbara Corso (Phone), John Korslund, Jan Pederson, Heidi Schleicher, Kate Schumann, Erica Spackman, Sabrina Swenson (Phone), LeeAnn Thomas (Phone)

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<td>1</td>
<td>Laboratory Update Session–Checklist Submissions</td>
<td>Martin</td>
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Handout: 1 Martin Checklist Submissions

Background/Issues: Three non-veterinary diagnostic laboratories have requested membership in the NAHLN:

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<tr>
<td>AK</td>
<td>State of Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation</td>
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<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>USDA, FSIS, Food Emergency Response Network Div.</td>
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<tr>
<td>WI</td>
<td>USGS National Wildlife Health Center</td>
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Martin was approached by the Associated Press saying that some organizations/individuals believe that the lab in Alaska is on the “fast track” to membership. The same steps will apply to any laboratory whether they are a veterinary lab or not. Both the lab in AK and the State Veterinary office are under the AK Dept. of Environmental Conservation.

Action/Outcome:
- NAHLN Steering Committee will be consistent on approving labs regardless if the lab is a veterinary lab or non-veterinary lab. See topic # 4 Laboratory Update Session – Current Laboratory Approval Process.
Handout: 2 Wagner Lab Designation

**Background/Issues**: The issue of how to designate laboratories that participate in the NAHLN has been a continuing problem. Originally, there were terms used to designate so-called core laboratories, or more recently, the original laboratories have been designated as pilot” laboratories. However, there has been much confusion among stakeholders as to what it means to be a NAHLN laboratory and it has caused concern as our stakeholders attempt to seek Congressional support.

**Discussion**: Wagner drafted a policy statement with the following nomenclature being proposed for the designation of laboratories with the appropriate definition of each term.

- **Member laboratory** – fully committed labs to the NAHLN mission and able to respond to FAD or other animal disease emergencies. This group includes the original 12.

- **Affiliate laboratory** – this group is receiving limited annual support from USDA and they are working towards becoming a member laboratory.

- **Associate laboratory** – this group is performing testing for control of specific animal diseases under contracts or cooperative agreements with USDA-APHIS.

- **Adjunct laboratory** – this group comprises laboratories that wish to be linked to the NAHLN but do not wish or choose to meet all requirements for a Member laboratory. Examples could be the National Wildlife Diseases Laboratory in Madison, WI, or DOD laboratories.

It was suggested to use level designation such as Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 to help define the lab’s participation in the NAHLN. Concerns were raised that the terminology may give the impression of the technical capabilities rather than the funding level. Another suggestion was to use colors/symbols such as moons/half moons etc. to indicate participation levels.

After discussing, the group came to consensus on the following naming convention:

- **Core Member Laboratory**
- **Member Laboratory**
- **Contract Member Laboratory**
- **Adjunct Member Laboratory**

**Action/Outcome**:
- Wagner - Update the policy statement and send it out with the new descriptions for review.
Handout: 3 Wagner Lab Participation

**Background/Issues:** Wagner provided the revised document that will be used as the guidelines for determining lab participation in the NAHLN.

**Action/Outcome:**
- No action items assigned.

Handouts: 4 Martin AAVLD Requirements; 5 Martin AAVLD Auditor Checklist

**Background/Issues:** Over the past several years, AAVLD modified their laboratory accreditation process so that it is very similar to the OIE and ISO 17025 processes.

**Discussion:** The checklist is used to determine if a lab is technically proficient as well as having adequate quality, bio-security and bio-safety systems in place. Right now participation in the NAHLN focuses on labs ability to perform specific diagnostic methods, but it is very important to use standards such as the AAVLD checklist to ensure that each lab has the appropriate systems in place. The current AAVLD checklist may have some requirements (such as full service pathology or toxicology departments) that may not be necessary for NAHLN participation. But the quality, bio-security and bio-safety system requirement that are on the AAVLD checklist are vital to NAHLN participation.

A standard approach needs to be taken for all labs participating in the NAHLN. A committee was recommended to review the AAVLD checklist and modify it for NAHLN purposes. (See action item.)

Two recent scenarios occurred where NAHLN membership was requested by labs that point out the need to have a standardized process.

- In Colorado, a vet diagnostic lab requested to participate in the NAHLN without communicating with the existing NAHLN lab in Colorado.
- In California, a county lab requested to participate in the NAHLN but did not communicate with the state officials or the existing NAHLN lab in California.

Additionally, many private companies are running their own testing and advertising services for AI. These situations bring up the point that for high profile diseases such as AI, diagnostic or private labs will develop their own tests. It was discussed that a decision needs to be made by USDA VS regarding how to handle test results from labs that are not a part of NAHLN or NPIP.
A message needs to be sent to Human Health and Veterinary Health officials describing what the NAHLN is doing and encourage them to use NAHLN approved labs. Also, we need to work with NPIP to coordinate test result reporting. The NAHLN will continue with their marketing strategy including education on testing capacity.

**Action/Outcome:**
- McElwain – Committee of Gene Erikson, Terry McElwain, and Ron Wilson will review the AAVLD accreditation standards and modify as appropriate for NAHLN purposes. Steve Weber will incorporate IT standards including result messaging.
- Martin - A message needs to be sent to Human Health and Veterinary Health officials describing what the NAHLN is doing and encourage them to use NAHLN approved labs.
- Martin/Arnoldi – Write a decision memo to Dr. Clifford’s office to discuss issue of how to handle private testing for regulatory diseases.

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<td>Laboratory Update Session–CSF and FMD Proficiency Testing</td>
<td>Schumann</td>
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**PowerPoint Presentation: 6 Schumann FMD CSF Prof Test**

**Background/Issues:** This round of proficiency testing included train-the-trainer. Schumann described the process for putting the proficiency panels together, the train-the-trainer program, grading criteria for the 2006 panel and results, and the potential use of armored RNA. Details of each subject are in the PowerPoint Presentation.

**Action/Outcome:**
- No Action Items

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<td>Preparedness Session–Using Models to Predict Lab Space Needed and Capacity</td>
<td>Corso</td>
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**PowerPoint Presentation: 7 Corso Preparedness Models Lab Space**

**Background/Issues:** The models described specifically looked at FMD and included lab capacity and identified the need for additional BSL-3 space.

**Discussion:** The model assumes that samples from infected states are sent to NAHLN labs in FMD free states. This may or may not be possible.

This may not be a “worst case scenario.” In the UK, the delay in identification of disease allowed at least 6 infected herds go to slaughter and was only recognized only after retrospective sampling. The presentation did not take into consideration the impact of wildlife infection which could play a huge factor. Capacity was based on using all trained personnel and with two shifts. Also, this is based on PCR, but could potentially involve serology. This model does not take into consideration a multi-focal disease introduction or absentee rates in the workforce.
There has been a limit on the number of people that could be trained and proficiency tested for NAHLN activities. It would be more efficient to cross train and have additional proficiency tested personnel ready to go in an emergency. Details are in the PowerPoint Presentation.

**Outcome:** The NAHLN will continue to look into additional funding to support more training and PT. The process would be easier if we use armored RNA since no permits would be required and there are no shipping issues. The Veterinary Stockpile will also allow for PT, reagents, personal protective equipment, etc to assist in rolling out the supplies for an outbreak situation.

### Preparedness Session–Laboratory Emergency Response Plans

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<td>Preparedness Session–Laboratory Emergency Response Plans</td>
<td>Wagner &amp; Reed</td>
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**Handouts:** 8 Wagner Emergency Plan NAHLN Labs; 9 Example Emergency Response Plans AZ CA FL WV; 10 Wagner Suggested Lab Guidelines for AH Emergency Mgt; 11 Martin Lab Response Plan

**Background/Issues:** Wagner handed out an outline for the proposed Emergency Plan for NAHLN Labs along with copies of individual state Emergency Response Plans (AZ, CA, FL, and WV) and AAVLD suggested guidelines.

**Discussion:** The AAVLD template will be used as a guideline. Most labs are aware of the need to have the emergency response plan plans but just haven’t put them together.

There are some specifics that would apply to NAHLN labs that are not included in the AAVLD plan such as:

- Source of funding
- Source of barcodes and scanners

**Action/Outcome:**
- Martin, Wagner and Ardans – Review the AAVLD Emergency Response Plan and add topics and send to Dr. Ardans who will be the first pass reviewer.
- Martin – Discuss with IT about a secure part of NAHLN Website so the labs that have a plan can post them.

### Preparedness Session–Activation of the NAHLN

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<td>Preparedness Session–Activation of the NAHLN</td>
<td>Wagner</td>
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**Handouts:** 12 Wagner Activation NAHLN

**Background/Issues:** Wagner has drafted a policy statement for Animal Disease Outbreak and Activation of the NAHLN. Activation of the NAHLN needs to be clearly defined.

**Discussion:** Need to determine if the activation process will apply to endemic diseases.
The term activation implies that different actions need to be taken. The steps needed should be defined as well as how lab directors will be notified that the NAHLN has been activated.

The process needs to include expectations for laboratory space. During the END outbreak, several researchers lost research grants because there were no resources to continue their work once they were overloaded with diagnostic samples. It will be necessary to include language that could be given to University Deans and administrators stating that if the NAHLN is activated all laboratory focus is on diagnostic testing & that might interfere with teaching, credits, research, etc. This is easy to justify if emergency is occurring in your state because the Governor’s statement of emergency will over-ride the other issues but if a NAHLN lab is activated to help test samples for another state (and their own state is not involved directly in the outbreak) then some sort of justification will be needed.

APHIS requires that all employees can be mobilized in the case of an emergency. It is also possible that we could increase capacity if additional personnel are trained and proficiency tested.

Action/Outcome:
- Wagner/Steering Committee Members – Wagner will send out the electronic version of the Animal Disease Outbreak and Activation of the NAHLN Policy Statement. The committee will review the statement and respond with specific suggestions and comments.

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<td>11</td>
<td>Impact of Select Agent Rule during an Outbreak</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
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Background/Issues: There should be a policy document that addresses how NAHLN labs deal with Select Agents during an outbreak. Several programmatic issues need to be addressed by VS staff personnel.

Discussion: Surveillance samples in a presumed negative population are normally processed in BSL-2 space. When an outbreak of a select agent is confirmed, testing of samples from the affected area should be done in BSL-3 space. There is concern about how the Select Agent rule will impact NAHLN labs during an outbreak. There are several groups within VS that will be involved in determining how an outbreak will be addressed.

There are several VS policy issues that need to be addressed including:

- In the early stages of an outbreak, is it necessary to get an FAD number each time we get a PCR positive?
- How will samples be tracked?
- Is it possible to get an exemptions as has been done with other outbreaks?

The labs still have 7 days to get rid of, transport or destroy positive samples.

Also, we need to make sure that this VS group communicates with the Health and Human Services group to ensure that USDA and CDC would treat diagnostic samples the same way.
**Action/Outcome:**

- Steering Committee Group – Send specific issues with the Select Agent Rule in the face of an outbreak to Martin.
- Martin – Forward the team’s specific issues to the VS policy and program personnel. Work with a group within VS to create a policy memo on how the Select Agent Rule should be addressed during an outbreak.
- Martin – Contact Emergency Management, NCIE, and NCAHP staff to answer the questions about the requirements in an outbreak situation whether or not each time we would need to get an AVIC/FAD number prior to shipping and how the samples are being tracked.

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<td>ICLN Scenarios</td>
<td>Wagner</td>
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**Background/Issues:**

The ICLN is coordinating with different agencies under the Science & Technology and Homeland Security Institute (HSI) to provide scenario trials to test different networks including human, animal and plant. Network Coordinators will be providing information on laboratory capacity and the modelers will put together scenarios.

NAHLN will participate in FMD and AI scenarios that will measure what would happen in the system if an outbreak occurred today. The following assumptions were made:

- Presidential emergency has been declared
- Money not an issue
- Exclude political sampling
- Exclude testing for forensic purposes
- Necessary reagents and supplies are available
- Staff is available
- Worried well included in scenario

Some of the NAHLN Labs are also LRN labs. Concern has been expressed at the ICLN meetings about what samples will be prioritized in labs with membership in both NAHLN and LRN.

Models will be run in June 2006.

**Action/Outcome:**

- None

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<td>CSF Surveillance</td>
<td>Korslund</td>
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**PowerPoint Presentation:** 13 Korslund CSF Surveillance
Background/Issues: CSF surveillance was initiated in January 2006 and is a joint effort between National Animal Health Program Staff, the National Surveillance Unit, and the NAHLN. The program currently involves all high risk states outlined in the Surveillance plan. Testing is occurring in the original 12 labs and will branch out to other labs this fiscal year. Confidentiality of results is the #1 issue for production companies.

Discussion: Data is currently being entered using a web-based system. Some states are having issues with the amount of time it takes to enter the data. Weber is working to resolve those issues. Korslund believes that active aggressive surveillance is critical to National security. Details of this subject are in the PowerPoint Presentation.

Action/Outcome:
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<td>14</td>
<td>AI Session-Update on Meat Sampling for AIV</td>
<td>Spackman</td>
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PowerPoint Presentation: 14 Spackman Meat Sampling AIV

Background/Issues: The Meat Sampling for AIV just finished up last week and the results are still being analyzed.

Discussion: To determine the detection profile of H5N1 strain of AI, Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory (SEPRIL) has tested numerous sample types with several standard AIV detection methods. Additional research is ongoing for the optimization of RT-PCR processing and extractions from wild bird cloacal swab samples. Details of this subject are in the PowerPoint Presentation.

Action/Outcome:
- None

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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>AI Session-NVSL AI Update</td>
<td>Pederson</td>
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PowerPoint Presentation: 15 Pederson AI Update; 16 Pederson Comparison AI Test

Background/Issues: The major goal of the USDA assay is to detect any H5 virus that could infect US poultry which is also an OIE and USDA requirement. The CDC test is more specific where as the USDA is much more broad.

Discussion: The number of people trained and proficiency tested is increasing because of the focus on AI. There are now 47 labs approved. Last year there were 39. Additional labs have requested training. Much of the training will be conducted in NAHLN labs using the Train the Trainer concept. Details of this subject are in the PowerPoint Presentation.

Action/Outcome:
We will continue to get updates from NVSL.

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<td>16</td>
<td>Short Topics-Status of Brochure</td>
<td>Martin</td>
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**Background/Issues:** The brochure will be more generic so that it will be available for a couple of years. The brochure is in the final stages of approval and will go to layout soon. There will be a flap at the bottom to hold information cards that we can create and modify quickly. Many different labs submitted pictures that will be used in the brochure and on the information cards.

**Action/Outcome:**
- The final brochure should be available in approximately four weeks.

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<td>17</td>
<td>Short Topics-NAHLN Emergency Management Symposium</td>
<td>Martin</td>
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**Background/Issues:** The symposium is scheduled to be held at AAVLD/USAHA and the announcement is out. It is being coordinated with Pat Blanchard. Last year there were 184 attendees. All aspects of emergency management will be discussed including the IT portion.

**Action/Outcome:**
- The registration form was provided to the Steering Committee.

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<td>Short Topics-Website Update</td>
<td>Martin</td>
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**Background/Issues:** There hasn’t been time to work on the website.

**Action/Outcome:**
- With additional resources onboard now, this will be updated and reviewed soon.

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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Short Topics-Scrapie and CWD</td>
<td>Powers</td>
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**Background/Issues:** Members of the steering committee are interested in knowing when Scrapie and CWD diagnosis in farmed elk will be switched to a rapid test format versus IHC. Most of Europe uses one of many rapid tests for Scrapie, and use IHC or western blot as the confirmatory test only. In the US, there is abundant experience and data comparing ELISA to IHC on CWD, showing that both are equally sensitive and specific as long as the sample is properly obtained (i.e. disagreements tend to be sampling errors not test errors). IHC is labor intensive, has a long turnaround time, is not readily useful for high throughput and requires pathologists to read slides. Recently the last two batches of antibody for IHC have resulted in numerous false positives, but since the tissue is in formalin, there is no mechanism to verify tests with western blot or ELISA. The false positive problem is another difficulty with IHC.
Action/Outcome:
- Powers – A description of the concern of lack of acceptance of using ELISA testing for Scrapie and CWD will be written up. Martin will forward this concern to USDA Program Staff.

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<td>20</td>
<td>Short Topics-BSE</td>
<td>Martin</td>
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Background/Issues: We are still at the enhanced level of surveillance until further notice. Approximately 700,000 samples have been tested up to this point.

IT – Steve Weber reported that currently BSE surveillance is in the system and there are about 5% of the cases that have been run, but that the labs have not submitted final test results for the test.

Action/Outcome:
- IT is working to communicate with labs and get the final results are entered in the system.

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<td>21</td>
<td>Short Topics-VSV</td>
<td>Swenson</td>
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Background/Issues: The VS After Action Report was put together after the 2005 outbreak. The Working Group wrote a decision memo to describe the diagnostic testing and rolling out to labs where clinical illness is present. We are unsure when we will hear about a decision.

Validation of PCR: There was a problem getting negative cohort samples. DVL is now testing the negative cohort samples. The second version of assay has been developed and NVSL will be testing samples from 2004 and 2005 to determine equivalency of the performance characteristics of the two versions of the assay.

Action/Outcome:
- Swenson will provide updates as needed.

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<td>Deputy Administrator</td>
<td>Clifford</td>
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Discussion: NAHLN is very high profile and is getting a lot of support.

NVSL Director will be announced later this week.

Dr. Clifford will review the VSV Decision Memo.

Brucella ovis ELISA – have received positive feedback on the performance of the new assay. O’Toole suggested that determining the performance characteristics in experimentally infected
animals would be helpful and would provide a good source of control sera. Arnoldi will follow up.

BSE testing - Currently operating an enhanced levels. There is a possibility of moving to maintenance levels as early as this summer. Funding is available to test thru July 1, 2006. Additional funding will be requested if needed. A 30 day notice will be given before moving to a maintenance level.

Plum Island facility - There have been 30 submissions from 19 states on possible sites for a new location. They have solicited from A&E firms to provide the design.

Action/Outcome:
- Arnoldi - Follow up on the Brucella ovis issue.
NAHLN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Whitten Building, Washington, DC
Wednesday, April 26, 2006, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

NAHLN Steering Committee: Alex Ardans, Bev Byrum, Gene Erickson, Bob Hillman, Bill Hoffman, Barb Martin, Terry McElwain, Tom McKenna, Donal O’Toole, Barb Powers, Willie Reed, Gary Sherman, Bill Wagner, Ron Wilson

IT Representatives
Jim Case, Jay Kammerzell, Steve Weber

Recorder
Jane Longwell

Guests
Joan Arnoldi, Tammy Beckham, Ron DeHaven, Ben Hinson (by phone), Heidi Schleicher, Seth Swafford, Steve Weber, Charles Wick, Dave Wick, Jim Galioto and Sam Yenne

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<td>Welcome from the APHIS Administrator</td>
<td>DeHaven</td>
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Discussion: The NAHLN has made a lot of progress and is a high priority in the agency. The SC was thanked for all of their efforts. Specifically, Case and Kammerzell the entire NAHLN IT change control board were thanked for their efforts with the NAHLN IT System and training classes.

The animal ID project is moving but slower than anticipated. One of the big issues is confidentiality. APHIS understands the importance of this issue and it may require legislation.

Select Agent Rule - APHIS understands the many concerns and the effect of rule. Hillman commented that the main concern in Texas is how the rule has limited functioning of diagnostic and research centers. The SC believes this is going to have a major impact on an outbreak situation. DeHaven suggested determining if the issues are regulatory or legislative and then developing a formal method of capturing all of the concerns so that the issues and possible solutions are clearly articulated.

BSE Testing – APHIS is in the process of determining when we will go to a reduced level of testing. There will be a 30 day notice when the decision is made to reduce testing. An analysis paper is in the final review stages that describe the risk analysis of BSE in the US that will be used to begin reducing the level of testing.

FY07 budget - is being considered in Congress now.
Plum Island Facility - Multiple proposals have been received to replace the existing Plum Island facilities. It is approximately a $500M project that is probably 10 years in the future. The Secretary of Ag has the authority to change the legalities of moving FMD testing to mainland USA.

Avian Influenza – Dr. DeHaven is traveling to Atlanta for an industry meeting. Industry is participating in planning efforts. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements are being reviewed to ensure that ALL workers in all agencies and levels – have the SAME level of PPE to reduce risk of human infection. Surveillance of wild migrating birds is beginning and testing will help determine appropriate policy for at risk domestic poultry in migration zones. A widespread information distribution and education program will be implemented for backyard poultry. Vaccination is right now only being considered for some of the zoological park collections. Currently there are no plans in place to allow vaccine to be available for private birds and pets. Many Federal agencies will have roles if there is an AI pandemic. There is an interagency “playbook” that describes how the agencies will deal with animal health scenarios.

Action/Outcome:
- Martin – Involve Emergency Management and NCIE to develop a paper on Select Agent issues.

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<td>2</td>
<td>Wildlife Services &amp; Avian Influenza Surveillance</td>
<td>Swafford</td>
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**PowerPoint Presentation:** 17 Swafford Wildlife AI Surveillance

**Background/Issues:** During the next year, there will be approximately 80,000 samples collected from healthy birds and 5,000 to 25,000 samples collected from dead birds. Wildlife Services has asked the NAHLN to test these samples.

There is an Interagency Strategic Plan in place for early detection of AI in wild birds.

Any result submitted by Wildlife Services will be reported back to the submitter. If the real time PCR is positive for H5 or H7 it will be sent to NVSL for confirmation.

Because of the fact that non-migratory wild birds that may be in contact with migratory fowl, there has been some discussion about looking at some other species. The scope of testing will be determined by available resources. It may be necessary to work with State Wildlife Departments to help with funding.

USDA / WS would like to pay for dead bird surveillance IF there is a die off of 5 or more birds (if it is a terrestrial bird) and recognizes that a single bird death of a species of interest (goose, swan, duck) may be a sentinel bird and will pay for testing.

Sherman asked about current research on susceptibility of individual species of birds. Swafford replied that some studies have indicated that Canada geese have shown a 100% mortality rate, but problem is that there are thousands of species of migratory birds & it isn’t possible to test and
research all of them. Because of that, WS will sample "at risk" species including ducks, geese, waterfowl, and shorebirds.

Data standards for wild birds are the same as those for domestic poultry sampling and wildlife sampling. WS has received a listing of 107 species from DOI. That list will be provided to NAHLN IT-CCB to add to taxonomy listing.

The people collecting will label these samples with the common name of each bird. Using Audubon code for the common name is the accepted method for describing the species, not the scientific name. WS will provide CADIA with a Audubon code list.

States that do not have NAHLN labs were asked to provide a list of three NALHN labs they would want samples sent to. Some states have reporting requirements for H5 or H7. WS recognizes these requirements and expects NAHLN labs to follow those requirements. DOI is included in reporting plan for confirmed results. WS, VS and DOI will continue to work together to ensure a methodical approach.

**Action/Outcome:**
- Swafford will continue to work with Martin on NAHLN involvement
- VS/NAHLN needs to review AI results communication plan to determine if state level reporting and federal level reporting is coordinated for preliminary vs. confirmed results.

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<td>3</td>
<td>Assay Development &amp; Validation Session – Assay Development at FADDL</td>
<td>McKenna</td>
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**Background/Issues:** Steven Muir from Pfizer has been hired & will start in May to lead the Validation team at Plum Island. Since the time of the meeting, Dr. Muir has decided not to accept the position at FADDL. The position was just reopened. When the position is filed, FADDL will complete work on the following projects:

- Complete validation of FMD assay
- Complete 96 well extraction method for CSF and FMD
- Complete 96 well format equivalency for CSF and FMD assays

**Discussion:** We need to ensure that as methods are validated, a consistent approach and changes are tested and evaluated. There are four assays for four diseases that have been bench validated by ARS and will be provided to APHIS for field validation (ASF, Rinderpest, CBPP and lumpy skin disease). Its anticipated that is will take three to four months to complete ASF validation. There is currently no source of positive Rinderpest samples. It will take 18 months to complete the field validation for each assay. It’s possible that two assays could be field validated at the same time, but not all four. Positive samples will have to be tested either in the country of origin or at FADDL. NAHLN labs will be used to help with the negative cohort testing.
There are several openings at FADDL. The most need is in PT/Validation Section where there are currently five vacancies. There are three term ARS employees and the rest are funded with NAHLN monies.

Because of zoonotic aspect FADDL is not allowed to work with live RVF virus. Work on RVF will have to be deferred to DOD, DHS or CDC. Feasibility studies have been completed on an RT-PCR available for RVF but the assay has not been validated.

**Action/Outcome:**
- FADDL will continue to work on validating various assays.

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<td>4</td>
<td>Assay Development &amp; Validation Session – NAHLN/LLNL Interlab Comparison &amp; Surge Capacity Demos</td>
<td>Hindson &amp; Beckham</td>
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**PowerPoint Presentation:** 18 Hindson Interlab Comparison

**Background/Issues:** 14 labs (including FADDL) were selected to participate in the study. Each of the 14 labs was trained on site by Lawrence Livermore personnel in November and December 2005.

**Discussion:** The summary report of the study is almost ready for distribution to the participating labs. The surge demonstrations will take place in May (CA) and July (CO). Details are in the PowerPoint presentation.

**Action/Outcome:**
- None

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<td>5</td>
<td>Assay Development &amp; Validation Session – A Physical Means of Virus Detection</td>
<td>Wick</td>
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**Handouts:** 19 Wick IVDS; 20 Wick IVDS Edgewood Pub; 21 Wick VDSC Briefing; 22 Wick Article References

**Background/Issues:** David Wick, Charles Wick and Sam Yenne from the Virus Detection Systems Corporation presented

**Discussion:** Overall their goal is to have this available as a front end screening test to quickly narrow the search for confirmatory testing. Demonstration of technology was set-up on April 27, 2006 at Edgewood Army lab for NAHLN members. Three machines are available for use to NAHLN labs. This is will be coordinated through Martin. Details are in the handouts and PowerPoint presentation.
Action/Outcome:
- Martin and McElwain – Review the information and determine if it should go to the NAHLN Methods Technical Working Group.

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<td>6</td>
<td>Assay Development &amp; Validation Session – Joint USDA/DHS Diagnostic Road Map Update</td>
<td>Beckman</td>
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PowerPoint Presentation: 23 Beckman Joint Diagnostic Road Map

**Background/Issues:** The Diagnostic Road Map will be updated in FY 2006 to include the milestones and deliverables for FY 2006 through 2010, required capabilities for FMD and other top priority foreign animal diseases, requirements and capabilities for lab capacity and additional requirements for demo projects to bring necessary capabilities and CONOPS into place. Martin, McElwain, McKenna and Reed will serve on the group to update the Diagnostic Roadmap. The initial meeting will take place at Plum Island on June 6 and 7. Details are located in the PowerPoint presentation.

Action/Outcome:
- None

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<td>Assay Development &amp; Validation Session – NAHLN – Methods Technical Working Group</td>
<td>Martin &amp; McElwain</td>
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**Background/Issues:** There is a real need for a NAHLN Methods Technical Working Group to include Federal partners and State partners.

**Discussion:** McElwain will co-chair the NAHLN Method Technical Working Group with Martin. The methods subgroup will review existing methods and their uses, determine gaps, review new technologies, review validation criteria, and participate in dossier review. The subgroup will also address equivalency, assay modifications and updates, assay performance (including continual performance assessment and recalculating performance characteristics and confidence intervals), as well as developing and updating assay performance characteristics summary sheets.

Action/Outcome:
- Martin - E-mail will be sent to laboratory Directors requesting nominees for the Technical Working Group.

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<td>8</td>
<td>NAHLN IT Systems Session – Update on Review of the Lab Proposals for IT Funding</td>
<td>Hoffman</td>
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**Background/Issues:** CSREES has received four proposals for spending the 30K (OH, KY, MS, and MN) and will be updating the 13 original IT Cooperative Agreements. CSREES will also add cooperative agreements for the three labs that received IT funding through APHIS. CSREES will ask for 2005 report (representing $30K funding in 13 labs) and will ask for 2006 plans ($50K in 16 labs).

**Action/Outcome:**
- None

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<td>NAHLN IT Systems Session – Review of Training Sessions</td>
<td>Case</td>
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**Background/Issues:** In January and February 2006, 56 people were trained on message structure, mapping of terminology, standardization of data and terminology and provided with an overview of Rhapsody.

There are issues getting the labs up and running with the IT Systems. Several labs are in the middle of LIMS implementation and would like to wait to work on messaging until their LIMS system is in place.

Eight of the original (core member) labs have yet to send valid messages. Of the 16 additional labs, one has sent a message. The whole process is not moving as quickly as planned and hoped. It may be necessary to be more firm with the labs that haven’t sent messages. The four labs sending messages are CO, WA, CA and IA plus NVSL.

Clear cut goals, expectations and target dates need to be communicated to the labs. Also, the labs should be required to provide IT milestones that will be reviewed by the NAHLN IT CCB.

Barcode scanners have been purchased and will be sent to each of the labs for AI/CSF sampling. All of the sample collection kits are being sent from NVSL with barcodes.

Rhapsody Training will be held May 9-10 in Ft. Collins, CO. This system pulls data from LIMS system and forms the message to the NAHLN repository. Rhapsody also has the ability to pull data and send it to Public Health Department. Rhapsody could look for HL7 messaging from compatible equipment and send that into the LIMS system. The cost is $20,000 for software (one time fee – paid for by NAHLN) and $5,000 site license fee for the labs.

**Action/Outcome:**
- Martin & Hoffman – Contact each of the original 12 labs and request a report of their progress on IT messaging. NAHLN and CSREES will work together to review laboratory implementation plans and budget request to determine feasibility of IT plans. Going forward funding could be affected depending on their timeline for IT System implementation.

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<td>NAHLN IT Systems Session – Harmonization of the CA Pilot Project Messaging Efforts</td>
<td>Weber</td>
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PowerPoint Presentation: 24 Weber IT Systems Update

Background/Issues: The California Pilot Project kicked off last October.

Discussion: The reporting of results for samples received from Wildlife Services will be through the Department of Interior. Details are located in the PowerPoint Presentation.

Action/Outcome:
- Weber – Check on how the State Veterinarians will be informed of the results of samples received from Wildlife Services.

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<td>11</td>
<td>NAHLN IT Systems Session – Update NAHLN IT Systems Timeline</td>
<td>Weber</td>
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PowerPoint Presentation: 24 Weber IT Systems Update

Discussion: If rRT-PCR gets a positive H5 result in NAHLN lab, the NAHLN lab reports an inconclusive or positive to the NAHLN database, and the sample is sent to NVSL for confirmatory testing. NVSL would finish their testing procedure and validate results prior to submitting their results to NAHLN database. Negative results are not a problem; they will be submitted to the NAHLN database and shared with the submitting lab once it is available. Reporting positive results may be an issue and needs to be addressed. Detailed information on the IT Systems timeline are in the PowerPoint presentations.

Action/Outcome:
- McKenna and Arnoldi – Contact individuals within VS to discuss the system of reporting confirmatory testing at NVSL.

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<td>Data Confidentiality and NBIS</td>
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Background/Issues: Many of the confidentiality issues need to have legal and legislative review. Many of these issues are coinciding with Animal ID program. We are trying to be as compliant as possible with current standards (for GDB and EMRS).

Discussions: We must be in agreement with FOIA and be able to respond to FOIA requests to follow the law. CEAH and NAHLN need basic location information so that the proper data analysis can be performed. Any data from submissions that are paid for by the federal government is subjective to FOIA, no matter if the data is held in a federal system or if it is held in the submitting state’s system.

In Tennessee there is an issue since Tennessee is an open book information state – so that if the data is held on a State owned computer – then it is not protected.
It is going to take legislation to protect the information. We will also be working with DHS to help protect the data. We will need to coordinate the confidentiality of data for test results with the Animal ID program.

DHS is asking NAHLN to submit summary reports for certain animal disease surveillance testing. NBIS is interested in obtaining summary reports of CSF testing but we are not sure how they want the reporting and how it relates to the confidentiality issues.

**Action/Outcome:**
- Weber - Report to DHS that NAHLN will report weekly negative CSF result totals on a national level. But this will not happen until the CSF reporting is worked out – so we are 1-2 months out from having to send this information summary.
- Martin & Hoffman – Work together to ensure the animal approaches to exemption to FOIA for animal and plant surveillance and testing data are consistent.

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<td>13</td>
<td>Summary of Action Items</td>
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**Action Items Tuesday, April 25:**
- Wagner - Update the policy statement and send it out with the new descriptions for review.
- McElwain – Committee of Gene Erikson, Terry McElwain, and Ron Wilson will review the AAVLD accreditation standards and modify as appropriate for NAHLN purposes. Steve Weber will incorporate IT standards including result messaging.
- Martin - A message needs to be sent to Human Health and Veterinary Health officials describing what the NAHLN is doing and encourage them to use NAHLN approved labs.
- Martin/Arnoldi – Write a decision memo to Dr. Clifford’s office to discuss issue of how to handle private testing for regulatory diseases.
- Martin, Wagner and Ardans – Review the AAVLD Emergency Response Plan and add topics and send to Dr. Ardans who will be the first pass reviewer.
- Martin – Discuss with IT about a secure part of NAHLN Website so the labs that have a plan can post them.
- Wagner/Steering Committee Members – Dr. Wagner will send out the electronic version of the Animal Disease Outbreak and Activation of the NAHLN Policy Statement. The committee will review the statement and respond with specific suggestions and comments.
- Steering Committee Group – Send specific issues with the Select Agent Rule in the face of an outbreak to Barb Martin.
- Martin – Forward the team’s specific issues to the VS policy and program personnel. VS needs to create a policy memo on how the Select Agent Rule should be addressed during an outbreak.
- Martin – Contact Emergency Management, NCIE, and NCAHP staff to answer the questions about the requirements in an outbreak situation whether or not each time we would need to get an AVIC/FAD number prior to shipping and how the samples are being tracked.
- Powers – A description of the concern of lack of acceptance of using ELISA testing for Scrapie and CWD will be written up. Martin will forward this concern to USDA Program Staff.
Arnoldi - Follow up on the Brucella ovis issue.

Action Items Wednesday, April 26:

- Martin – Involve Emergency Management and NCIE to develop a paper on Select Agent issues
- Martin - E-mail will be sent to laboratory Directors requesting nominees for the Technical Working Group.
- Martin & Hoffman – Contact each of the original 12 labs and request a report of their progress on IT messaging. NAHLN and CSREES will work together to review laboratory implementation plans and budget request to determine feasibility of IT plans. Going forward funding could be impacted depending on their timeline for IT System implementation.
- Weber – Check on how the State Veterinarians will be informed of the results of samples received from Wildlife Services.
- McKenna and Arnoldi – Contact individuals within VS to discuss the system of reporting confirmatory testing at NVSL.
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