



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and Plant Health
Inspection Service

Veterinary Services

Veterinary Services Strategic Plan FY 2006 to FY 2011

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INTRODUCTION

Veterinary Services (VS) conducts the animal health safeguarding mission as part of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), a unit of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). As a 21st century animal health organization, VS is engaged and vigilant across the full spectrum of animal health. Our planning strategy is focused on improving our performance and execution at every level of our organization. The VS strategic plan provides direction and planning focus to our important work as the nation's lead animal health organization.

VS' wide-ranging responsibilities include:

- Coordinating national animal health emergency preparedness and management
- Ensure the safe import of animals, animal products, and biologics
- Diagnosing foreign and domestic animal diseases
- Monitoring the health and disease status of U.S. livestock and poultry
- Certifying animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics for export
- Developing, implementing and enforcing standards to ensure safe and effective animal vaccines
- Delivering scientific and economic information, policy advice, risk assessment and other data to address challenges faced by animal producers and stakeholders
- Certifying quality assurance methods used in animal production
- Directing national programs to eradicate selected animal diseases
- Managing key activities in a national network of laboratories to perform day-to-day testing and provide emergency response capability
- Partnering with our state stakeholders, industry customers, veterinary and agricultural institutions, and extension services to protect animal health

As an agency that protects critical U.S. infrastructure, VS is broadly aligned with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

objectives and other key domestic security partners. This new security-conscious environment requires increased cooperation at every governmental level. VS is a key cooperators in the new security structure through an expanded set of networks that include valuable state and emergency management personnel.

In addition to homeland security, our leadership, resource, planning and strategic execution decisions are focused on protecting our nation's animal health and facilitating safe agricultural trade. For example, VS has recently responded to animal health emergencies such as exotic Newcastle disease, avian influenza, and vesicular stomatitis. Our surveillance and emergency response activities are vital to protecting our nation's global agricultural trade. VS continues to monitor the status of key diseases with a human health component such as global avian influenza.

VS VISION

The premier animal health agency. Leading change, driven by science, prepared and responsive to public needs, with integrity as our cornerstone.

VS MISSION

Veterinary Services protects and improves the health, productivity, quality, and marketability of animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics by:

- monitoring animal health and conducting surveillance for animal diseases;
- preventing, controlling and/or eliminating zoonotic and animal diseases; and
- partnering with domestic and global stakeholders

VS CORE VALUES

Veterinary Services has strong convictions about how business is to be conducted and how people are to be treated both inside and outside VS. Our

key values are important because they represent our character, our global image, and our essential traits. They are:

- **Competence**
- **Integrity**
- **Respect**
- **Valuing People**
- **Diversity**
- **Teamwork**
- **Innovation**

VS Organization

The VS infrastructure is nationally distributed. VS headquarters facilities are located in Riverdale, Maryland and Washington, DC. The headquarters offices perform the organization's program and regulatory policy. The National Center for Animal Health Programs at Riverdale, Maryland provides program guidance, budget planning and animal disease expertise to the extended VS structure.

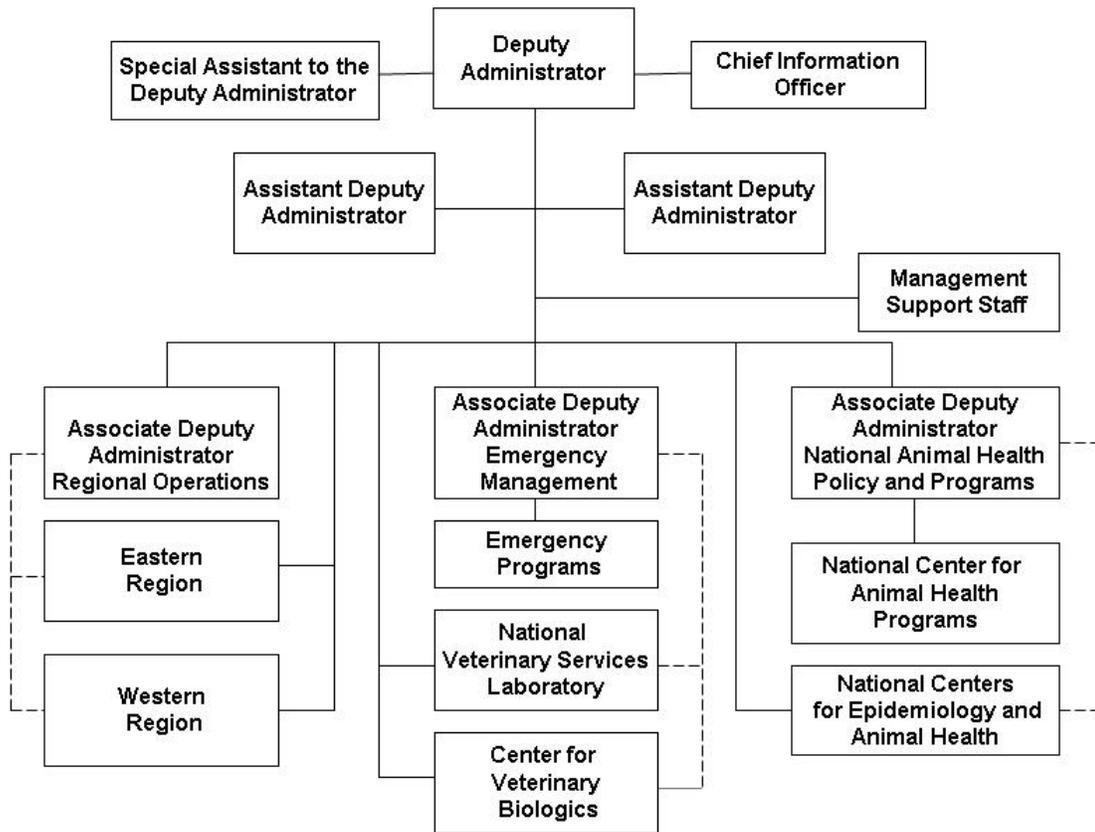
Veterinary Services field offices are located strategically within the states to serve VS customers. Some VS field offices serve multiple states. VS surveillance, export certification, and disease eradication and control activities are implemented at these field locations. Regional offices located in Raleigh, North Carolina and Fort Collins, Colorado provide oversight of these field offices.

The Center for Veterinary Biologics located in Ames, Iowa regulates veterinary biologics to ensure that available products are pure, safe, potent, and effective.

The National Veterinary Services Laboratories, located in Ames, Iowa and Plum Island, New York, provide diagnostic services which support foreign animal disease identification; control and eradication programs; and exportation and importation of animals and animal products.

The Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH) in Fort Collins, Colorado sets standards for the national surveillance program and administers the National Animal Health Monitoring System. CEAH also develops technology applications; maintains key databases; and conducts epidemiological, economic, and spatial analysis and trade risk assessments.

Veterinary Services



STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

Veterinary Services enters the 2006-2011 planning period with a myriad of distinct challenges and opportunities. The animal health environment changed significantly during the last planning period. The post 9-11 environment resulted in new security direction and governmental realignments to improve domestic security. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has become the epicenter of the nation's domestic security and emergency planning infrastructure

New domestic security players and increased funding have already led to better national preparedness. In spite of many changes, distinct challenges and uncertainties confront organizations that are first responders. VS must continue its commitment to planning for this changed world by improving communications,

surveillance, emergency planning and response, and day-to-day execution.

To respond to growing threats and the requirement for increased vigilance, VS is implementing infrastructure and procedural improvements. Dramatic improvements have already been made to the national laboratory network. Critical laboratory infrastructure has been improved through new facilities at Ames and through partner investments at the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN).

In addition, the emergency national stockpile of critical veterinary medicinal products is proceeding according to plan and available funding. Key recommendations of the Animal Health Safeguarding Review are being implemented as funding becomes available.

Finally, VS continues to emphasize human capital management through enhanced recruiting, training opportunities, and improved leadership. Our dynamic workforce has increased as a result of budget initiatives; however, the growth has not been commensurate with the increased expectations across a broad range of programs. The growth in the VS workforce has brought with it a concomitant increased workspace requirement that must be addressed by the management team. Meeting our regulatory and animal health protection responsibilities will be a continuing challenge during this planning period.

Veterinary Services leadership is committed to anticipating and responding to animal health and trade issues, and mitigating risk through wise regulatory actions and prudent investment of people and other resources. This commitment will be challenged by flat or declining budgets at a time of growing needs. In the absence of increased resources, VS will need to pursue smart technology investments, make better use of available data, and identify lower priority activities that can be realigned against new and growing mission requirements. Our strategy reflects our management response to growing animal health challenges.

CRITICAL ISSUES

Our management team believes that the items listed below are critical planning issues for VS. Our near-to-mid-range planning revolves around these key issues.

- Globalization and trade issues add a political dimension to our business that must be considered when developing policy options and making key decisions
- A crisis environment is becoming more prevalent, with emphasis on speed and multi-tasking; the digital revolution and the “always-on-world” present unique challenges
- Personnel recruitment, veterinary infrastructure and workspace needs must be addressed

- The human health impact of animal diseases is increasingly impacting VS disease management and priorities
- Preparedness to respond to disease outbreaks is increasingly important in the global environment
- The growing influence of agribusiness is impacting and will continue to impact our decision making and day-to-day execution
- Technology changes will contribute to our business in significant ways

STRATEGY

We will strengthen our business practices to ensure that we become a premier animal health agency. We will build an organization that balances mission priorities including: animal disease eradication and control programs, emergency management, preparedness, regulatory activities, and surveillance.

KEY OBJECTIVES OF OUR STRATEGY

- Improve our business practices:
 - Institute strategic thinking as an agency priority
 - Invest in technologies that improve productivity and performance
 - Perform regular program reviews of key activities
 - Function as an organization that promotes success
 - Perform effective business planning in key areas
 - Emphasize performance-based accountability
 - Plan for leadership succession and recruiting
 - Promote better resource utilization
 - Ensure effective partnerships
 - Establish sound standards for key processes

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Protect the United States from the occurrence of adverse animal health events
2. Monitor and conduct surveillance of the health and productivity of our nation's animal health populations and monitor the health-related attributes of animal products and veterinary biologics
3. Enhance the health status of our nation's animal populations by anticipating and responding to new or emerging threats and managing, controlling, or eradicating those already identified
4. Enhance the marketability of our nation's animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics
5. Create a highly effective animal health organization

PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Veterinary Services will review annual progress and develop new program and management initiatives to implement our strategy and fulfill our mission requirements in a high-quality way. Current VS program initiatives are:

- Improve and streamline the regulatory process
- Resource the National Surveillance Unit and complete national surveillance objectives
- Complete the eradication of Brucellosis and Tuberculosis
- Improve LPAI/HPAI surveillance
- Establish the National Veterinary Stockpile
- Continue development of the NAHLN
- Complete NVSL Accreditation

- Support new technologies that improve productivity
- Increase the number of Veterinary Biologics available for use in the control and diagnosis of new and emerging animal diseases
- Improve Veterinary Services Information Technology

MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Our management initiatives reflect the key management actions VS will emphasize to improve VS-operations and make VS a more attractive and rewarding place to work. Our current management initiatives are:

- Improve the budget process
- Establish a succession plan
- Institute business planning
- Build VS IT infrastructure
- Enhance recruitment
- Make strategic planning relevant
- Revitalize the infrastructure project
- Implement Animal Health Safeguarding Review Action Plans
- Expand program reviews of key activities

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

Veterinary Services leadership will conduct periodic strategy sessions to ensure that the new strategy is deeply embedded into our daily, weekly, and monthly routine. These activities will be guided by the VS Planning Office.

Strategic action milestones will be developed for annual program and management initiatives and any out-of-cycle new starts of strategic importance. These milestones will be regularly reviewed at our management and planning meetings to ensure that the management team

provides the leadership, resources, communication, and employee development to reach our goals.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The VS strategy to improve business practices will enhance execution and our ability to implement key initiatives and objectives. VS will develop new outcome-based measures that will measure our effectiveness across a range of programs. Our strategy emphasizes improvement of internal operations as a key way to improve effectiveness in this environment. Our external measures will also be refined to ensure that they measure effectiveness of a broad range of disease programs and animal disease exclusion and response activities. Additionally, we will benchmark our standards against goals of the President's Management Agenda to ensure that our effectiveness supports the Executive Branch goals. Examples of indicators are:

- Progress in meeting our strategic goals;
- Improved performance in each of our business activities;
- Better motivated employees and improved quality at every level;
- Program managers working diligently to develop and acquire better financial data and provide better analysis;
- Inserting key technologies that provide automated information and solutions across our key programs;
- Leadership agreement that VS has the right people in the right place to achieve top-notch results;
- President's Management Agenda plans are met; and
- Effective security arrangements to ensure the safety of all VS employees.

Goals and Objectives

Veterinary Services' goals are aligned with APHIS' goals and with the needs of VS' stakeholders. Achievement of these goals requires broad interaction of all VS program, staff, and scientific units and extensive partnering with other Federal and State agencies, private industry, and academia.

Goal 1: Protect the United States from the

occurrence of adverse animal health events. *(Adverse animal health events can result from the real or perceived impacts of diseases, pests, vectors, toxins, or natural disasters on public health, productivity, or trade)*

Goal 2: Monitor and conduct surveillance of the health and productivity of our nation's animal health populations and monitor the health-related attributes of animal products and veterinary biologics

Goal 3: Enhance the health status of our nation's animal populations by anticipating and responding to new or emerging threats and managing, controlling, or eradicating those already identified.

Goal 4: Expand the domestic and international marketability of our nation's animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics

Goal 5: Create a highly effective animal health organization.

Goal 1: Protect the United States from the occurrence of adverse animal health events.

Safeguarding the health of America's animals has always been central to VS' mission. VS will continue to exercise vigilance in protecting our nation's animals from disease. To enhance our safeguarding capabilities, VS will continue to foster partnerships within APHIS and USDA and with other federal agencies, states and industry.

- Objective 1.1: Prevent incursions of adverse animal health events by monitoring and managing the importation of animals, animal products and veterinary biologics;
- Objective 1.2: Collaborate internationally to maintain awareness of international animal health events and improve global animal health;
- Objective 1.3: Improve readiness to rapidly respond to disease incursions;
- Objective 1.4: Prevent the introduction and establishment of non-indigenous invasive species capable of harming U.S. animal populations

Goal 2: Monitor and conduct surveillance of the health and productivity of our nation's animal populations and monitor the health-

related attributes of animal products and veterinary biologics

Information regarding the health status, productivity, and health-related attributes of U.S. animal populations, animal products, and biologics is at a premium. Public concerns about diseases that affect both animals and people only reinforce the need for accurate, timely, and thorough information. To expand the effectiveness of its monitoring activities, VS will continue to enhance relationships with states, industry, public health agencies, and other governmental and private groups. VS' monitoring network will be broad and inclusive. VS will seek out and employ cutting-edge technology to bolster its monitoring efforts.

- Objective 2.1: Rapidly detect foreign and emerging animal diseases including those with public health/food safety implications;
- Objective 2.2: Track and report levels of certain endemic animal diseases including those with public health/ food safety implications;
- Objective 2.3: Conduct facility inspections to ensure compliance with animal health regulations and program standards;
- Objective 2.4: Increase and improve capabilities to identify and trace animals and animal products nationwide to support disease investigations and other needs;
- Objective 2.5: Improve pharmacovigilance (post-licensing monitoring) for veterinary biologics;
- Objective 2.6: Improve laboratory diagnostic services, products, and training to support animal disease surveillance.

Goal 3: Enhance the health status of our nation's animal populations by anticipating and responding to new or emerging threats and managing, controlling, or eradicating those already identified.

Veterinary Services will continue to work to guarantee that America's animals are the healthiest in the world. To reach this goal, VS will not only continue to effectively manage its existing animal health programs, but will build its capacity for responding to new threats. VS will enhance its emergency response capabilities by developing innovative and adaptive strategies, infrastructure,

and partnerships.

- Objective 3.1: Respond effectively to adverse animal health events and continue to improve the national animal health emergency response capabilities;
- Objective 3.2: Ensure the nationwide availability of adequate laboratory capacity to support surveillance, animal disease investigations and control and eradication programs;
- Objective 3.3: Ensure the availability of quality veterinary biological products for diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of animal diseases;
- Objective 3.4: Reduce the incidence and spread of serious animal diseases including those with public health/food safety implications;
- Objective 3.5: Eradicate animal diseases that pose a threat to the national economy;
- Objective 3.6: Develop an effective mechanism for evaluating the significance of emerging threats and determining the appropriate response;
- Objective 3.7: Enhance industry understanding of the associated risk and the monitoring and control of disease reservoirs and vectors.

Goal 4: Expand the domestic and international marketability of our nation's animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics.

Veterinary Services shares with the greater APHIS community an expanding commercial protection role. This role requires VS to respond to other country proposals for animal import requirements and help negotiate science-based animal import requirements, ensuring access to international markets for America's animals, animal products, and veterinary biologic exports are protected. VS uses cutting-edge science, high technology, and proactive communication to maintain market accessibility.

- Objective 4.1: Improve market access and promote timely and efficient certification for exports of U.S. animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics;
- Objective 4.2: Certify animal production facilities as using processes designed to enhance the quality and safety of their animal-

derived food products;

- Objective 4.3: Provide disease-status certification for animals entering domestic or international trade;
- Objective 4.4: Improve diagnostic testing associated with the marketing of animals and animal products.
- Objective 4.5: Enhance the integrity of the export certification process through training of AVICs, Export Document Examiners and through improved training of accredited veterinarians.
- Objective 4.6: Provide accurate, timely information relative to changes in country import requirements in a convenient format to VS Area Offices.

Goal 5: Create a highly effective animal health organization.

Only with a strong, effective organization can VS hope to achieve its other goals. Keys to VS

creating this type of organization are: eliminating internal fragmentation, creating a culture which fosters a greater degree of employee appreciation, excelling in communication, and valuing flexibility.

- Objective 5.1 Recruit, develop, and retain a competent, committed and diverse workforce that provides high quality service;
- Objective 5.2 Improve internal and external communications to increase awareness, enhance cooperation and coordination, and improve productivity;
- Objective 5.3 Utilize information technology effectively to improve every aspect of VS operations;
- Objective 5.4 Implement administrative and management approaches which maximize flexibility while retaining accountability.

Veterinary Services Strategic Plan—Appendix

Table 1: Matrix of VS Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Protect the United States from the occurrence of adverse animal health events. <i>(Resulting from the real or perceived impacts of diseases, pests, vectors, toxins, or natural disasters on public health, productivity, or trade).</i>	Goal 2: Monitor and conduct surveillance of the health and productivity of our nation’s animal populations and monitor the health-related attributes of animal products and veterinary biologics.	Goal 3: Enhance the health status of our Nation’s animal populations by anticipating and responding to new or emerging threats and managing, controlling, or eradicating those already identified.	Goal 4: Expand the domestic and international marketability of our Nation’s animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics.	Goal 5: Create a highly effective animal health organization
1.1 Prevent incursions of adverse animal health events by monitoring and managing the importation of animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics	2.1 Rapidly detect foreign and emerging animal diseases including those with public health/food safety implications.	3.1 Respond effectively to adverse animal health events and continue to improve the national animal health emergency response capabilities.	4.1 Improve market access and promote timely and efficient certification for exports of U.S. animals, animal products, and veterinary biologics.	5.1 Recruit, develop, and retain a competent, committed, and diverse workforce that provides high quality service.
1.2 Collaborate internationally to maintain awareness of international animal health events and improve global animal health.	2.2 Track and report levels of certain endemic animal diseases including those with public health/food safety implications.	3.2 Ensure the nationwide availability of adequate laboratory capacity to support surveillance, animal disease investigations and control and eradication programs.	4.2 Certify animal production facilities as using processes designed to enhance the quality and safety of their animal-derived food products.	5.2 Improve internal and external communications to increase awareness, enhance cooperation and coordination, and improve productivity.
1.3 Improve readiness to rapidly respond to disease incursions.	2.3 Conduct facility inspections to ensure compliance with animal health regulations and program standards.	3.3 Ensure the availability of quality veterinary biological products for diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of animal diseases.	4.3 Provide disease-status certification for animals entering domestic or international trade.	5.3 Utilize information technology effectively to improve every aspect of VS operations.
1.4 Prevent the introduction and establishment of non-indigenous invasive species capable of harming U.S. animal populations.	2.4 Increase and improve capabilities to identify and trace animals and animal products nationwide to support disease investigations and other needs.	3.4 Reduce the incidence and spread of serious animal diseases including those with public health/food safety implications.	4.4 Improve diagnostic testing associated with the marketing of animals and animal products.	5.4 Implement administrative and management approaches which maximize flexibility while retaining accountability.
	2.5 Improve pharmacovigilance (post-licensing monitoring) for veterinary biologics.	3.5 Eradicate animal diseases that pose a threat to the national economy.	4.5 Enhance the integrity of the export certification process through training of AVICs and Export Document Examiners, and through improved training of accredited veterinarians.	
	2.6 Improve laboratory diagnostic services, products and training to support animal disease surveillance.	3.6 Develop an effective mechanism for evaluating the significance of emerging threats and determining the appropriate response.	4.6 Provide accurate, timely information in a convenient format to the VS Area Offices relative to changes in country import requirements.	
		3.7 Enhance industry understanding of the associated risk and the monitoring and control of disease reservoirs and vectors.		

Acronyms

AI	Avian Influenza
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
AVIC	Area Veterinarian in Charge
CEAH	Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health
CVB	Center for Veterinary Biologics
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FAD	Foreign Animal Disease
FMD	Foot-and-mouth disease
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
LPAI	Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza
NCAHP	National Center for Animal Health Programs
NAHLN	National Animal Health Laboratory Network
NAHMS	National Animal Health Monitoring System
NSS	National Surveillance System
NVSL	National Veterinary Services Laboratories
OIE	Office International des Epizooties
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VMO	Veterinary Medical Officer
VS	Veterinary Services