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March 28, 2008

Dr. Richard E. Hill, Director
USDA APHIS Center for Veterinary Biologics
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
510 South 17th Street, Suite 104
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Dr. Hill,

The AVMA applauds the mission of the USDA Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB) to assure that pure, safe, potent and effective veterinary biologics are available for the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of animal diseases. The AVMA recognizes the continued efforts of the USDA CVB to promote the health of our nation's animals by playing this critical role in animal health.

As discussed in its letter to the CVB dated November 21, 2006, the AVMA believes there is a critical need for an efficacious canine influenza virus (CIV) vaccine for the promotion of animal health and well-being. The AVMA's assertion for this need is also echoed in AVMA's Policy on Canine Influenza Virus Vaccine Need.

According to the AVMA's 2007 *U.S. Pet Ownership and Demographics Sourcebook*, over 43,000,000 households now own dogs. Dogs play a pivotal role in the human-animal bond and are associated with positive health effects for their owners. While an unknown number of CIV infections have been reported since 2004, this virus is found throughout the United States and is considered highly contagious.

The AVMA continues to encourage the CVB to collaborate with industry stakeholders, to license an efficacious CIV vaccine for the improvement of animal health and welfare.

The AVMA recognizes that the CVB will hold its annual public meeting on April 7, 2008. As stated previously, the AVMA contends that the need for CIV vaccines is urgent and would like to relay its concern to the CVB for consideration at its meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your continued efforts to safeguard America's animals through effective biologic agents. We look forward to a prompt response relaying current CVB activities regarding CIV vaccines, following the CVB's public meeting in April.

Respectfully,

Lyle P. Vogel, DVM, MPH
Assistant Executive Vice President
American Veterinary Medical Association