

Fiscal 2018 USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service & the Food Safety and Inspection Service



AVMA SUPPORTS

Federal funding is needed to secure programs that directly impact veterinary medicine, animal health and welfare, food safety, animal disease surveillance and public health.

APHIS & FSIS:

- **\$950,000,000, Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)**
- **Report language for Public Health Veterinarian recruitment and retention at the Food Safety and Inspection Service**

Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service

USDA	FY	Final	P.L.
APHIS	2017	\$946,212,000	115-31
APHIS	2016	\$894,415,000	114-113
APHIS	2015	\$874,490,000	113-235
APHIS	2014	\$824,896,000	113-79
APHIS	2013	\$756,214,215	113-2
APHIS	2012	\$816,534,000	112-55
APHIS	2011	\$865,000,000	112-10
APHIS	2010	\$904,953,000	111-80

APHIS' budget has increased a bit these last few years but much of it has been an accounting adjustment reflecting changes in how rent is paid for facilities. This is not new money that can be used to fund APHIS programs. Increases are needed to support its full array of programs and services as well as for manpower needs.

FY17 animal health programs were funded at \$309.953 million while plant health programs at \$318.308 million. APHIS protects U.S. livestock, poultry, specialty crops, corn, cotton, and wheat industries worth approximately \$195 billion.

APHIS manpower has had a net gain of about 446 employees since its low point of employment in FY12. As part of its Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) preparations for 2016, APHIS was able to hire short-term appointment personnel – about 80 Veterinary Medical Officers and 150 Animal Health Technicians (of these, approximately 30 veterinarians and 50 technicians are still on board).

APHIS requires veterinarians be accredited through the **National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP)** to provide services on behalf of the Federal government. There are more than 66,000 accredited veterinarians in the U.S.

NVAP provides no-cost training online as well as through lectures at dozens of veterinary meetings and conventions, on 29 topics related to animal health. Each year NVAP delivers 90,000 training modules to accredited veterinarians and 45,000 modules to persons other than accredited veterinarians. NVAP also delivers the Emerging and Exotic Diseases of Animals course over 4,000 times per year to U.S. veterinary students and graduate veterinarians.

Animal Welfare: Protecting vulnerable animals from predation and those covered by the **Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and Horse Protection Act (HPA)** from inhumane treatment and taking swift enforcement action in response to violations is essential. AVMA urges Congress provide no less than \$705,000 for HPA enforcement and \$29 million for AWA enforcement. APHIS is able to attend less than 30% of the approximately 300 Tennessee Walking Horse shows held annually. APHIS Animal Care has worked to improve its inspections of approximately 10,731 sites, including commercial breeding facilities, laboratories, zoos, circuses, and airlines to ensure compliance with AWA standards. Animal Care is actively licensing new facilities that now require USDA regulatory oversight under the retail pet store rule. The APHIS Animal Care team currently consists of 114 inspectors with 7 vacancies who perform and oversee animal welfare compliance inspections, 4-species specialists with 1 vacancy who support inspectors with complex regulatory compliance issues, and 7 compliance specialists who support the pre-licensing process and other aspects of compliance assurance.

We urge \$10.5 million for the **National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS)** in FY18, level funding. NAHMS collects, analyzes, and disseminates data on animal health, management, and productivity of U.S. livestock and poultry. It conducts its commodity-based surveys on a 4-7 year cycle. AVMA supports antibiotic use data collection through NAHMS and requests funding to enhance monitoring for antimicrobial resistant bacteria among livestock. We also support the development of metrics on antibiotic use and stewardship through collaboration between FDA, USDA, and affected commodities.

Animal disease surveillance and diagnostic testing: APHIS' animal disease surveillance includes foreign animal disease and transboundary disease response capability. APHIS works to prevent animal diseases from entering the U.S. that would cause economic devastation. Examples of diseases APHIS has recently contended with are HPAI, Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus (PEDV) and Senecavirus A, a swine disease that causes vesicular lesions that mimic those found in Foot and Mouth Disease.

APHIS and NIFA's FADI combined funding to support the **62-member National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN)** with \$16.3 million in FY17. APHIS support comes from four budget lines – veterinary diagnostics; cattle health; equine, cervid, and small ruminant health; and swine health. AVMA urges APHIS funding for the NAHLN at \$15 million and FADI funding for the NAHLN at \$10 million in FY18. A fully functional NAHLN needs something closer to \$40 million going forward.

Funding will expand surveillance and surge capacity. Increases are needed to bolster the number and level of participating state labs; to spur development of infrastructure for electronic transmission of data between sample collectors, labs and state and federal databases; and increase efficiency and effectiveness of lab personnel training and employment both regionally and nationwide. Current support for the NAHLN comes from USDA-NIFA's Food and Agro-Defense Initiative and USDA-APHIS. Note: 34 NAHLN labs receive direct state appropriations of \$100 million toward total lab operation expenses of \$186 million.

The NAHLN is an early warning surveillance and emergency response system for emerging and foreign animal diseases and provides surge capacity for the necessary testing during disease outbreaks and during the recovery phase. NAHLN provides resources for lab testing, information management, quality assurance and the development and validation of new tests. During the recovery phase testing is necessary to establish a "disease free status" which also ensures international trading partners of that status.

During HPAI outbreaks NAHLN tests thousands of samples to ensure depopulation of infected flocks within 24 hours. NAHLN performs surveillance in surrounding areas to halt disease spread and tests premises to determine freedom of disease before repopulation occurs, and international trade resumes.

Participating NAHLN Labs: Federal, university, and state veterinary diagnostic laboratories participating can be found at <https://www.nahln.org/>.

AVMA urges congress to increase funding for the **Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB)** from \$16.4 million to \$24 million. Funding increases will be used to continue streamlining and improving biologics and biotechnology system processes so new technologies can reach the market faster. Despite tight budgets, CVB has worked hard to increase its capacity and received about 1,626 electronically in FY16. Each year, U.S. animal health companies produce 85.5 billion doses of animal vaccines. These vaccines are critical to protecting the health of America's flocks, herds, and pets from domestic and foreign animal diseases. In addition to improving animal health, these technologies could lead to similar breakthroughs in products for humans. Additionally, animal health companies are developing new and innovative biologics to greatly reduce the presence of food-borne pathogens in production animals, resulting in less pressure on pathogen reduction programs during processing. These new products represent a step forward in on-farm contributions to food safety.

APHIS promotes U.S. agriculture in the international trade by developing and advancing science-based standards with trading partners. Exports of U.S. agriculture are projected to reach \$136 billion in FY17.

USDA's Food Safety & Inspection Service

AVMA urges Congress to direct FSIS to dedicate no less than \$10 million from its annual appropriation to ameliorate recruitment and retention issues of public health veterinarians (PHV) by addressing inequity with its remuneration, specialty pay and continuing education offerings. FSIS must address persistent vacancy rates, currently 11 percent, within FSIS for PHV and ensure all slaughter plants remain under the direct supervision of PHVs.

Essential inspection duties that can only be competently performed by PHVs include: 1) Ante-mortem inspection for zoonotic and foreign animal disease; 2) Post-mortem verification of food safety, disease and conditions, and carcass disposition; 3) Expert direction of the national residue program; 4) Decision and direction of sample collection for pathology and microbiological determinations; and 5) Verification of eligibility of products for export and signing of certificates.