

March 1, 2014

Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S 128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Richard Shelby
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S.146A, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Nita Lowey
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Appropriations Chairs and Ranking Members:

We, the undersigned organizations are writing to urge your support for the inclusion of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network in the Fiscal Year 2015 Agriculture Appropriations Bill. The NAHLN was authorized in the recently passed Farm Bill (Section. 12105). Serving as our nation's most vital early warning system for emerging and foreign animal diseases, we are urging the members of the Appropriation Committee to fund the NAHLN at \$15 million for fiscal 2015.

The NAHLN was developed in response to the Public Health Security and BioTerrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, and the Homeland Security Presidential Directive – 9 (HSPD-9) of 2004 to “develop nationwide laboratory networks for food, veterinary, plant health and water quality that integrate existing Federal and State laboratory resources, are interconnected, and utilize standardized diagnostic protocols and procedures”.

During the past 12 years the NAHLN, composed of federal, university, and state veterinary diagnostic laboratories, has established the framework of a surveillance and emergency response system (not research) that provides critical and ongoing resources for laboratory testing, surveillance, information management, quality assurance and the development and validation of new tests.

Funding of NAHLN at \$15 million would result in improved compliance with HSPD-9 by:

1. expanding surveillance and surge capacity of the NAHLN by increasing the number and level of participating state laboratories;
2. additional development of the infrastructure for electronic transmission of data between sample collectors, laboratories and state and federal databases; and
3. increasing efficiency and effectiveness of laboratory personnel training and employment both regionally and nationwide. Federal funding for the NAHLN at \$15 million would be leveraged over six times by direct state appropriations in some states.

A survey of 34 NAHLN laboratories conducted by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians revealed direct state appropriations of \$100 million to NAHLN laboratories toward total laboratory operation expenses of \$186 million.

The NAHLN enables laboratories to test for economically devastating diseases such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, foot-and-mouth disease, avian and swine influenza, and classical swine fever. Without the NAHLN and the early disease detection it provides, an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) could cost US agriculture an estimated \$128 billion. This includes decreased revenues for corn and soybean of \$44 billion and \$24.9 billion, respectively. This loss translates into roughly 154,000 jobs over the course of the outbreak.

An August 2011 report from the GAO and a report from the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Proliferation and Terrorism both gave the nation a failing grade for its ability to respond to and recover from a biological attack, natural disaster or animal disease event as required by HSPD-9. In

order for the nation to adequately respond to, and recover from, a biological attack; the NAHLN needs \$15 million to ensure such a threat would be quarantined in a timely manner.

We thank you for your leadership on this vital issue to the agriculture industry and urge inclusion of this funding in the FY 15 Agriculture Appropriations Bill. Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance regarding this initiative.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Association of Veterinary Laboratory
Diagnosticians
American Veterinary Medical Association
American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American College of Veterinary Pathologists
American Dairy Goat Association
American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Goat Federation
American Health Institute
American Horse Council
American Meat Institute
American Sheep Industry
Association of American Veterinary Medical
Colleges
Association of Veterinary Biologics Companies
Fat and Proteins Research Foundation
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals
National Aquaculture Association
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Association of State Departments of
Agriculture
National Chicken Council
National Farmers Union
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Renderers Association
National Turkey Federation
Pacific Egg and Poultry
Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United
Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA)
United Egg Producers
United States Animal Health Association
United States Poultry and Egg Association
Western United Dairywomen

STATE ORGANIZATIONS

Agriculture Council of California
Arkansas Agriculture Department
California Cattlemen's Association
California Dairy Institute
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Grain and Feed
California Pork Producers Association
California Poultry Federation
California Wool Growers Association
Clemson University, South Carolina
Colorado Cattlemen's Association
Colorado Department of Agriculture
Colorado Livestock Association
Colorado State University, College of Veterinary
Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
Colorado Veterinary Medical Association
Cornell University, College of Veterinary Medicine
District of Columbia Veterinary Medical Association
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer
Services
Georgia Cattlemen's Association
Georgia Department of Agriculture
Georgia Farm Bureau Federation
Georgia Veterinary Medical Association
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
Iowa Pork Producers Association
Iowa Poultry Association
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land
Stewardship
Iowa State University
Iowa Veterinary Medical Association
Kansas Livestock Commissioner
Kansas Secretary of Agriculture
Kansas State Governor
Kansas Veterinary Medical Association
Kentucky Association of Equine Practitioners
Kentucky Cattlemen's Association
Kentucky Dairy Development Council
Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Kentucky Poultry Federation
Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association
Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
Commissioner
Louisiana State University President/Chancellor
Louisiana State University, School of Veterinary
Medicine

Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association
Michigan Agri-Business Association
Michigan Allied Poultry Industry
Michigan Cattlemen's Association
Michigan State University College of Veterinary
Medicine
Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
Development
Michigan Farm Bureau
Michigan Milk Producer's Association
Michigan Pork Producers Association
Michigan Veterinary Medical Association
Mississippi Cattlemen's Association
Mississippi Department of Agriculture and
Commerce
Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation
Mississippi Poultry Association
Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association
Missouri Cattlemen's Association
Missouri Veterinary Medical Association
New Jersey Department of Agriculture
New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association
New Mexico Department of Agriculture
North Carolina Cattlemen's Association
North Carolina Department of Agriculture and
Consumer Services
North Carolina Pork Council
North Carolina Poultry Federation
New Mexico Cattle Growers
New Mexico Dairy Producers
New Mexico Livestock Board
New Mexico Veterinary Medical Association
North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association
Ohio Veterinary Medical Association
Oregon Veterinary Medical Association
PennAg Industries Association
Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association
Texas Association of Dairywomen
Texas Cattle Feeders Association
Texas Pork Producers Association
Texas Poultry Federation
Texas and Southwest Cattle Raisers Association
University of Minnesota
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer
Services
Virginia Veterinary Medical Association
Washington State Department of Agriculture