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April 25, 2013

The Honorable Pat Roberts
United States Senate
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
United States Senate
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
United States Senate
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
United States Senate
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Roberts, Moran, Blunt, and McCaskill,

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) applauds your continued efforts to advance our nation's biosecurity and agro-defense. AVMA offers enthusiastic support for your resolution recognizing the importance that biosecurity and agro-defense have on America's national and economic security. We hope that the resolution will soon be formally introduced and that Congress will pass it expeditiously.

In addition, AVMA urges Congress to pass the President's request for \$714 million in FY 2014 along with the state government of Kansas providing an additional \$202 million to fully fund construction of the National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in Manhattan, Kansas. We also support the President's request for \$29.3 million for life and safety infrastructure at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC).

Congress and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have taken the necessary steps to ensure that NBAF will be the safest and most secure laboratory of its kind. Construction on this new, state-of-the-art, high-containment facility is needed for the study of foreign animal, emerging and zoonotic (transmitted from animals to humans) diseases that threaten the U.S. animal agriculture and public health. In addition to Bio-Safety Level 2 and 3 lab capabilities, NBAF will be the first lab in the U.S. to have Bio-Safety Level 4 (BSL-4) containment for research on high-consequence diseases that impact large animals.

In this era of global travel and rapidly changing disease threats, veterinarians and farmers have appropriately raised concerns about potential foreign animal disease outbreaks in the U.S. Constructing NBAF is an essential step forward in addressing this national challenge safely and effectively. Delaying construction of NBAF does not change the fact that PIADC is already too small and antiquated. Furthermore, according to DHS, PIADC does not have the facilities to conduct research on foreign animal, emerging and zoonotic diseases at BSL-4 containment.

The AVMA urges Congress to move forward with FY 2014 funding so that construction may begin on this critically important facility. Please contact Gina Luke, AVMA Governmental Relations Division Assistant Director ([gluke@avma.org](mailto:g Luke@avma.org); 202-289-3204) if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

W. Ron DeHaven, DVM, MBA
Executive Vice President and CEO