

AVMA



American Veterinary Medical Association

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Larry L. May
NPPD/IP/POD
NIPP Program Management Office
Mail Stop 8530
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, DC 20528-8530

Re Docket # DHS-2008-0054

Dear Mr. May:

I am writing on behalf of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), established in 1863, and the largest veterinary medical association in the world. As a not-for-profit association established to advance the science and art of veterinary medicine, AVMA is the recognized national voice for the veterinary profession. The association's more than 76,000 members represent approximately 85% of U.S. veterinarians, all of whom are involved in a myriad of areas of veterinary medical practice including private, corporate, academic, industrial, governmental, military, and public health services.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is to be commended for ongoing review of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP). Specifically, the AVMA commends the DHS for recognizing Agriculture and Food as a Critical Infrastructure/Key Resource Sector.

The AVMA urges the Department of Homeland Security to maintain and to strengthen our nation's Agriculture and Food Sector, through identification of protective strategies in the NIPP that will reduce this Sector's vulnerability. In particular, we urge the continued engagement by DHS of state agency, tribal, and private-sector stakeholders in sector-specific planning, as this will lead to a comprehensive and inclusive protection plan that represents the sector in its entirety.

Protection of our nation's food supply is critical, as foodborne disease outbreaks and foreign animal disease introduction could devastate global trade and have dire food supply implications. For example, introduction of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) into the U.S. would be projected to cost more than \$37 Billion in monetary damage to the U.S. economy. In addition to animal health and monetary consequences, the psychological consequences of introduction of FMD in the US could cause food safety fears within the public, as well as severe distress of livestock producers and of businesses associated with the food supply.

The DHS's insight in recognizing the importance of ongoing review of the NIPP and inclusion of Agriculture and Food as Critical Infrastructure is to be commended. We appreciate the efforts of DHS and look forward to future opportunities to provide our recommendations.

Please feel free to contact Dr. Heather Case (800-248-2862 ext. 6632 or hc case@avma.org), should you need any additional information or explanation.

Respectfully,

W. Ron DeHaven, DVM, MBA
Executive Vice President