



USDA, APHIS, VS APPROACH TO EPIDEMIOLOGIC INVESTIGATIONS


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Veterinary Services


VS is responsible for protecting the health of U.S. animal agriculture through a number of services –


- Animal disease surveillance, control, and eradication
 - Manage national animal disease programs
 - Monitor health and disease status of US livestock and poultry -- NAHMS
- Emergency preparedness and response
- Epi investigations and tracing
- Animal disease diagnostics – NVSL, NAHLN
- Regulate veterinary biologics
- Import and export of animals, animal products, and biologics


What is the process?


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- **Request/Initiation** – requests from internal and external ag partners as well as One Health partners


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- **Assessment/Triggering** – assessing VS authorities, costs, benefits and resource availability

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- **Team Assembly** – use local expertise first and supplement as necessary

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- **Team Deployment** – to work closely with requesting entity

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- **Investigation** – chief goal to characterize problem to develop mitigation and prevention efforts

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- **Communication of Findings**- suite of options to provide flexibility in communicating results

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- **After Action Review** – continual improvement requires continual review

What kinds of investigations?



A suspect FAD that is confirmed negative for a known FAD (emerging disease)

A public health event involving zoonotic or toxic agent

A non-emergency investigation of an unusual syndrome or disease condition to identify risk factors

An in-depth investigation of a program disease situation to better target intervention strategies

FSIS-APHIS/VS MOU

- Documents the procedures and responsibilities of APHIS/VS and FSIS in assessing on-farm root cause in the context of a foodborne outbreak associated with FSIS-regulated product
- Does not change the way APHIS/VS will conduct on-farm epidemiological investigations
 - Voluntary, non-regulatory, confidential

VS Mission and how it fits in Pre-harvest Food Safety (PHFS)

- As the recognized animal health leader and trusted partner, Veterinary Services safeguards the health of animals, people, and the environment
 - VS can help address PHFS issues that occur before processing
 - We have expertise in conducting on-farm investigations
 - We have a very long and successful history of working with the food animal production industry and producers

VS Role in Pre Harvest Food Safety

- No authority to go on farm for food safety
- Work with industry and producers on a non-regulatory, voluntary basis to find practical solutions to ensure the safety of their product

What are the expected outcomes?

- Help animal production industries address pre-harvest food safety issues
- Assist in foodborne disease surveillance and response activities; including outbreak investigations and related root cause analysis
- Information to help develop and implement best practices to protect food safety and reduce risk of foodborne outbreaks

SE Pilot Project

- In 1992, APHIS/VS, in collaboration with the poultry industry (**poultry flocks voluntary enrolled**), academia, and the PA DOA, initiated the PA SE pilot project to identify on-farm management practices which would reduce the SE threat to public health
- The PEQAP was established in 1994 and was based on the findings of the 1992 SE pilot project
- The PEQAP greatly reduced SE prevalence in commercial layers in PA and was a model HACCP-based food safety program for EQAPs throughout the US



United States Department of Agriculture

Questions?

