



SEP 22 2008

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Washington, DC
20250

Dear Stakeholder:

Veterinary Services (VS) recently updated an internal policy memorandum regarding the program's animal health policy as it relates to wildlife. This update was made with the intent to reinforce the concept that disease transmission occurs between domestic livestock and wildlife. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to clarify the purpose and content of that document.

This VS memorandum was initially developed to provide guidance and clarification to VS personnel concerning the role of wildlife populations in animal disease control and eradication programs in 2006. The memorandum is not a statement of statute or of regulation, and it does not establish any formal change in disease control and eradication programs.

The document promotes the established tradition of VS personnel's collaboration with State and Federal agencies that have wildlife authority in animal disease situations. We deeply appreciate the critical role that our State and Federal partners have in managing animal diseases successfully, and VS is committed to continue to cooperate together in carrying out this work. In all animal disease programs, VS has always collaborated with State and Federal agencies and acknowledged the need to consider wildlife management issues in control and eradication efforts. The VS memorandum outlines several approaches that would promote further cooperation among VS and State and Federal agencies with wildlife authority.

We recognize that appropriate measures for managing diseases in livestock and in wildlife are inherently different and that disease occurrences in livestock and in wildlife must be handled accordingly. We also recognize that State wildlife authorities have primary authority and responsibility for managing free-ranging wildlife. We continue to value the expertise of our State and Federal partners and are committed to working cooperatively to safeguard the health of our Nation's agricultural animals.

Sincerely,

John R. Clifford
Deputy Administrator
Veterinary Services



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