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APHIS Announces Partnership to Improve Early Detection of Emerging Animal Diseases

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is announcing a new partnership between the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) and the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN). USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will place five scientists in labs in each of the five NAHLN regions to enhance the capabilities and capacities of NAHLN.

"We are thrilled to announce this partnership," said Dr. Rosemary Sifford, USDA's Chief Veterinarian. "Our goal is to ensure all network laboratories are poised to combat the threat of transboundary and emerging diseases to protect our nation's agricultural and food supply systems."

A review team made up of experts from APHIS, NBAF, and NAHLN identified five key NAHLN facilities across the country that will each host a scientist to work on this project. These scientists will evaluate and develop diagnostics for animal and zoonotic diseases. They will collaborate across the organizations, and will be

responsible for evaluating local, regional, national, and international threats and ensuring the NAHLN laboratories have the tools necessary to diagnose emerging threats.

APHIS is funding this project with NBAF Partnerships and Innovation funds as part of an overall strategy to help prevent animal pests and diseases from entering the United States and reduce the spread and impact of potential disease incursions through advance planning and preparedness.

The NAHLN coordination team selected the following laboratories to participate:

- Region 1: Cornell University Animal Health Diagnostic Center/New York State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
- Region 2: Virginia Tech Animal Laboratory Services
- Region 3: Michigan State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
- Region 4: Arizona Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
- Region 5: Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory

NBAF's mission is to protect the United States against transboundary, emerging and zoonotic animal diseases that threaten our food supply, agricultural economy and public health.

The NAHLN is a network of animal disease diagnostic laboratories that provides ongoing disease surveillance, responds quickly to disease events, communicates diagnostic outcomes to decision makers, and has the capability and capacity to meet diagnostic needs during animal disease outbreaks. APHIS oversees the NAHLN in collaboration with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and in cooperation with the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians.

For more information and updates on the NAHLN-NBAF Partnership, please visit [USDA APHIS | National Animal Health Laboratory Network \(NAHLN\)](#).

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APHIS protects the health of U.S. agriculture and natural resources against invasive pests and diseases, regulates genetically engineered crops, administers the Animal Welfare Act, and helps people and wildlife coexist. We also certify the health of U.S.

agricultural exports and resolve phytosanitary and sanitary issues to open, expand, and maintain markets for U.S plant and animal products.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.