

EVOLUTION OF THE VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY REPORTING SYSTEM INTO A NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH REPORTING SYSTEM IN THE USA

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Les laboratoires de diagnostic dans 5 États des États-Unis d'Amérique et les Laboratoires Nationaux des Services Vétérinaires (NVSL) du Service d'Inspection de la Santé Animale et des Plantes du Ministère de l'Agriculture des États-Unis (USDA:APHIS), sous les auspices de l'Association Américaine des Diagnosticiens de Laboratoires Vétérinaires (AAVLD), de l'Association pour la Santé Animale des États-Unis (USAHA) et de l'USDA:APHIS, en 1990, ont instauré le Système de Reportage des Laboratoires de diagnostic Vétérinaires (VDLRS). Le but du VDLRS était surtout d'améliorer l'échange d'informations sur les résultats obtenus, les données techniques des tests utilisés, et sur tout fait ou résultat qui pourrait être d'importance pour les autres participants du système. Résultats des tests pour certaines maladies spécifiées, et les progrès dans les programmes de lutte et de contrôle de certaines maladies étaient publiés dans le rapport tri-mensuel DxMonitor Animal Health Report. En quelques années, 28 laboratoires dans 25 États participaient au VDLRS. À la suite de la décision d'étendre le VDLRS pour développer un Système National de Reportage de la Santé Animale (NAHRS), un projet pilote a été organisé pour inclure la majorité des laboratoires dans tous les États et Territoires avec la collaboration des Vétérinaires d'État de chaque État. La liste des maladies/agents pathogènes était étendue et toutes les espèces animales de production alimentaire étaient incluses. Actuellement, sous une résolution passée à l'Assemblée Annuelle de l'USAHA, en Octobre 1996, des groupes de travail ont été assemblés pour déterminer une liste de maladies / agents pathogènes à inclure et les conditions et procédures pour le reportage de ces conditions / agents. Les recommandations provenant de ces groupes de travail seront présentées lors de la prochaine Assemblée Annuelle de 1997.

Veterinary diagnostic laboratories in 5 states and the National Veterinary Services Laboratories of the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (USDA:APHIS) in 1990 instituted the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Reporting System (VDLRS), under joint sponsorship of the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD), the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and USDA:APHIS.

Goals were to establish «a voluntary system through which diagnostic findings and current events could be shared and through which communication between laboratories could be enhanced to establish disease trends and patterns.» The potential uses for the compiled data include a) diagnostic laboratory quality control, b) detection, evaluation and warning of emerging diseases, c) study of spatial and temporal patterns of diseases, d) risk analysis, e) establishment and evaluation of disease prevention, control and eradication strategies, f) national and international trade considerations, g) establishment of research priorities and h) teaching. Diagnostic findings on specific disease agents, information on disease control programs and news relevant to the diagnostic community are published in a quarterly report, the *DxMonitor* Animal Health Report. The dynamic process of selection of diseases to be included in the report was directed by the *DxMonitor* committee, later merged with the AAVLD Animal Disease Reporting Committee. A *DxMonitor* Editorial Review Group approves editing and layout for each issue. USDA:APHIS:Veterinary Services:Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health provides funding and personnel for compilation and processing of data, and production, publication and mailing of the *DxMonitor*.

The first issue of the *DxMonitor* was published in Fall 1990. Contributing laboratories were located in California, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York and South Dakota. The National Veterinary Services Laboratories and USDA:APHIS:Veterinary Services contributed information on tuberculosis in cattle herds, equine encephalitis, equine infectious anemia and brucellosis reactor herds, while the other diagnostic laboratories contributed data on bluetongue testing, leptospirosis, leukosis and specific etiologic agents associated with calf diarrhea. The Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Reporting System rapidly expanded to include 28 laboratories in 25 states. Progress on implementation and development of the VDLRS was evaluated annually at the meetings of AAVLD and USAHA. Case definitions were reviewed and updated regularly, either by ad hoc committees, by the *DxMonitor* Editorial Review Group, or the AAVLD Animal Disease Reporting Committee. Problems encountered included inconsistencies in reporting criteria used by different laboratories, and the determination of the reporting

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unit of interest, i.e. should diagnostic test results be reported for the tested specimen only, the affected / tested animal, or the affected / tested premise (herd).

By 1994, it was recognized that the VDLRS should be expanded into a comprehensive National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS). Following a workshop organized jointly by the AAVLD and USAHA disease reporting committees at the 1995 annual meeting in Reno, Nevada, a pilot program was initiated to include data from laboratories in all states on an extended list of conditions and commodities. State Veterinarian's offices also were invited to submit data / information to NAHRS. Information on presence / absence of 107 diseases or disease agents (Office International des Epizooties (OIE) lists A, B, C and others) in 7 commodities was requested. Commodities were cattle, sheep, goats, swine, equids, poultry and aquaculture. A first information survey for the January through March 1996 quarter was sent to 53 States and Territories, and to 223 diagnostic laboratories. A response was received from 46 State or Territorial Veterinarians or directly attached laboratories, 83 state/federal or university laboratories, and 13 private / commercial laboratories. However, reporting criteria had not been specified, and the decision to report presence or absence of a condition from a given State or laboratory was based on local expertise. As a consequence, discrepancies in reporting procedures between laboratories and between States occurred, and a review of goals and reporting criteria was suggested for the 1996 AAVLD and USAHA annual meeting in Little Rock, AR, prior to presentation and publication of NAHRS information.

Currently, under a resolution passed by the USAHA at the 1996 annual meeting in Little Rock, AR, species specific working groups have been established to determine needs for reporting specific conditions and define reporting criteria that are acceptable for commodity groups, professional associations, regulatory agencies, and national and international trade partners. Initially, working groups were established for poultry, swine, cattle, small ruminants, equids and aquaculture. Each working group includes one commodity group representative, one State Veterinarian, one specialized veterinary practitioner, and one representative each of AAVLD and USDA:APHIS:Veterinary Services. Working groups respond to a Steering Committee directed by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the USAHA Animal Disease Surveillance and Animal Health Information Systems Committee and including one representative of each working group and one representative of AAVLD and USDA:APHIS. All working groups are appointed by the President of USAHA. The AAVLD Executive Board has established an ad hoc committee to assist with case definition and reporting criteria. To date the following approaches have been suggested for development and implementation of the NAHRS: 1) Case definition and reporting criteria will be adapted in concordance with OIE criteria. 2) the primary responsibility for reporting disease information from each State will reside with the State Veterinarian's office, who coordinates all data and information generated and collected in a State. Recommendations regarding the format for the National Animal Health Reporting System and for the dissemination of collected information will be presented at the 1997 meeting of USAHA in Louisville, KY.