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?

• Request/Initiation — requests from internal and external ag partners as well as One Health partners

• Assessment/Triggering — assessing VS authorities, costs, benefits and resource availability

• Team Assembly — use local expertise first and supplement as necessary

• Team Deployment — to work closely with requesting entity

• Investigation — chief goal to characterize problem to develop mitigation and prevention efforts

• Communication of Findings — suite of options to provide flexibility in communicating results

• 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.
Questions?