The American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD), the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) respectfully request an appropriation of $15 million in new funding for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) in the FY 2016 Agriculture Appropriations bill.

Background:
- The NAHLN was developed in response to the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 and the Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-9 of 2004 to “develop nationwide laboratory networks for food, veterinary, plant health and water quality that integrate existing Federal and State laboratory resources, are interconnected, and utilize standardized diagnostic protocols and procedures”.
- During the past 12 years the NAHLN, composed of federal, university, and state veterinary diagnostic laboratories, has established the framework of a surveillance and emergency response system (not research) that provides critical and ongoing resources for laboratory testing, surveillance, information management including data analysis and sharing, quality assurance with an auditing system and the development and validation of new tests.
- The budget originally proposed for the NAHLN in 2002 was $30M.
- In 2014, funding, through various sources, totaled $12M, with $6.73M infrastructure/program support and variable fee for service funding of $5.27M.
- The 2014 Farm Bill authorized an additional $15M for the NAHLN to increase the capacity for disease response.

Importance to Animal Agriculture and the US Economy:
- The NAHLN enables laboratories to test for economically devastating and potentially zoonotic diseases such as mad cow disease, foot-and-mouth disease, avian and swine influenza, and classical swine fever; it serves as our nation’s most vital early warning system for emerging and foreign animal diseases.
- Without the NAHLN and the early disease detection it provides, an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) could cost US agriculture an estimated $128B. This includes decreased revenues for corn and soybean of $44B and $24.9B, respectively. This loss translates into roughly 154,000 jobs over the course of the outbreak.*

Future Funding and Use of Funds:
- $15M in additional federal funding for the NAHLN would be leveraged over 6X by direct state appropriations.
- This additional funding of the NAHLN would also result in improved compliance with HSPD-9 by: 1) expanding surveillance and surge capacity of the NAHLN by increasing the number and level of participating state laboratories; 2) additional development of the infrastructure for electronic transmission of data between sample collectors, laboratories and state and federal databases; and 3) increasing efficiency and effectiveness of laboratory personnel training and employment both regionally and nationwide.

The Need:
- An August 2011 GAO report and a report from the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Proliferation and Terrorism both gave the nation a failing grade for its ability to respond to and recover from a biological attack, natural disaster or animal disease event as required by HSPD-9.
- In order for the nation to be able to adequately respond to, and recover from, a biological attack affecting animals or people, the NAHLN needs to be fully funded.
- Funding of the NAHLN directly addresses our nation’s need for a safe, stable and nutritious food supply, one of the guiding principles of the Farm Bill.
- Current funding allows the NAHLN to function at marginal baseline levels, the additional $15 million authorized in the Farm Bill is essential for bringing the operational level of the NAHLN up to the required state of readiness, with the capabilities and full capacity for surveillance of and response to disease outbreaks.
- The 2012 USDA Economic Research Service estimated the production value of the US animal industries at $102.26B. Funding the NAHLN at $27M would represent only a 0.026% federal investment for disease surveillance to protect essential agriculture animal food industries.
Map Demonstrating the Existing NAHLN Framework

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