

## VS Looks Forward to 2015

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Veterinary Services' (VS) leadership is actively engaged in the process of determining what kind of organization VS needs to become by the year 2015. This effort has resulted in a "fact sheet" and a "Q and A" sheet that project a broad view of VS as it is anticipated to be in the year 2015. These documents do not include a detailed map outlining how to get there; rather, they take the first critical step in describing the scope of the organization's activities, mode of operation, and its partnerships. This effort is being referred to simply as "VS 2015."

### Why change?

The national animal health landscape has changed significantly in recent years and more change is coming. The mission and role of VS must also evolve to meet the animal health challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Some of the key forces affecting U.S. animal health and VS include:

- Evolving needs of the animal agriculture industry. With effective control or eradication of once-significant diseases, the scope and type of government services needed by the animal agriculture industry is evolving. Also, changes in industry structure—with an increase in the number of large-scale, production-intensive farm operations—have altered the type of government services needed.
- Advances in technology. New diagnostics, vaccines, and novel treatment technologies are changing veterinary medicine and management of animal disease events. Emerging treatment possibilities may reduce the need for traditional eradication programs that rely on large-scale depopulation activities.
- Emerging diseases. Public awareness of diseases like highly pathogenic avian influenza, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, West Nile virus, and others has escalated consumer/public demand for leadership at the intersection of animal and public health concerns.
- Demand for animals and animal products is increasing, especially in developing countries.

- Federal budgets are tightening, which is prompting increased emphasis on finding the best ways to utilize available resources.

### **VS 2015: The Vision for VS**

The expertise and core capabilities of VS position the organization not only to meet animal health challenges arising from the forces described above but also to become the national veterinary authority of the United States. To reach this goal, VS management has identified three key changes as essential for the VS organization:

- Greater emphasis on disease prevention, preparedness, detection, and early response activities;
- An expanding veterinary health mission to respond not only to issues impacting animal agriculture, but also to public health concerns connected to animal populations of any kind; and
- An expanding portfolio of interstate and international certification services.

VS intends to continue its strong partnerships with State animal health officials, agricultural producers, and veterinary organizations. VS will also continue to strengthen its relationships with the emergency management community at State and national levels. Additionally, VS will strive to enhance collaboration with public health and wildlife agencies and organizations.

VS leadership has recently begun discussing VS 2015 and the program's future direction with external organizations, including the United States Animal Health Association.

### **For more information**

Nora Wineland from VS' Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health has been assigned to a full-time position as VS 2015 Coordinator. Wineland will soon establish work teams and create other avenues to gather both employee and stakeholder input. You may e-mail her at [Nora.E.Wineland@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Nora.E.Wineland@aphis.usda.gov) or phone (970)494-7230.