As part of the NAHLN network, TVMDL stands ready and able to assist in the event of a foreign animal disease outbreak.

When it comes to preparing Texas and the Southwest for disaster, the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) has an important role to play. TVMDL is part of the more than 60-lab National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), and one of the 12 original laboratories in the network. NAHLN comprises regional and state veterinary diagnostic laboratories in 41 states as well as the federal National Veterinary Services Laboratories. To prepare for and be eligible for membership in the NAHLN, TVMDL has invested in training and facilities and maintains multiple accreditations and certifications.

Our commitment to NAHLN

The NAHLN laboratories provide nationwide animal disease surveillance and surge capacity for testing, response and recovery in the event of an animal disease outbreak. TVMDL works with NAHLN not only in the case of an emergency, but also on a regular basis. TVMDL conducts thousands of tests each year for the early detection of high-consequence pathogens that affect public health, animal health and the agriculture economy. Our ability to provide rapid, early and accurate diagnoses is vital to that role. TVMDL professionals receive the same training and certification as other NAHLN laboratories across the country, ensuring standardized methods that meet national requirements.

The National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) oversees NAHLN. NVSL has two facilities, one in Ames, Iowa, and the other at Plum Island, New York, to handle testing for foreign animal and high consequence diseases. However, additional laboratories within the NAHLN may be activated in case of an outbreak. Yearly, TVMDL professionals participate in extra training in order for the different labs to be approved to conduct tests for the following diseases:
• Avian Influenza (Amarillo, Center, College Station and Gonzales)
• Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (College Station)
• Chronic Wasting Disease/Scrapie (Amarillo and College Station)
• Classical Swine Fever (Amarillo and College Station)
• Foot-and-Mouth Disease (Amarillo and College Station)
• Exotic Newcastle Disease (Amarillo, Center, College Station and Gonzales)
• Influenza A Virus in Swine (College Station)
• Piroplasmosis (Amarillo and College Station)
• Pseudorabies Virus (College Station)
• Vesicular Stomatitis (Amarillo and College Station)

TVMDL is one of only six laboratories that could be activated to assist NVSL in testing for vesicular stomatitis (VS), a viral disease that was recently confirmed in five horses along the Texas-Mexico border. Routinely, TVMDL tests samples from clinically normal animals for VS, mainly for the purpose of livestock export. Additionally, TVMDL in College Station and Amarillo operate the only two high-containment, biosafety level 3 laboratories in Texas that are specifically dedicated to the animal diseases that pose significant threats to the agriculture economy and to public health.

First Responders
If a case suspected of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), or another high consequence disease, emerged in Texas or the southwest, as part of the NAHLN, TVMDL would be called into action. In the unlikely case of an FMD outbreak, NVSL would be unable to handle the influx of samples to their laboratory. In that situation, NVSL would activate the NAHLN laboratories to handle surge capacity and ensure timely results for animal owners.

The networks of laboratories help each other by sharing resources and expertise. Cooperation between agencies is key to a seamless activation of emergency measures.

TVMDL is prepared to assist in case of a livestock emergency. The laboratory is safeguarding Texas and the southwest through diagnostics. For more information, visit tvmdl.tamu.edu.

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