

## **Zoonotic Disease Surveillance in Food Safety and Food Defense: the Role of the Federal Veterinarian**

**Presenter:** John Hicks, Food and Drug Administration

**Co-Presenter:** John Sanders, Food and Drug Administration

**Session:** Oral

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, April 24; 11-12AM

Protecting the nation's food supply involves food safety and food defense. Food safety pertains to the activities involved with reducing foodborne hazards to the greatest extent possible. Food safety is achieved via a coordination of surveillance, inspections, risk assessment, research, and education. Foodborne illness is associated with a range of foods, including fresh produce. Utilizing produce as a case study, the role of the Federal Veterinarian will be described for the following: 1) outbreak, traceback and farm investigations; 2) wildlife as source/sentinel for pathogens on vegetables and environment; 2) good agricultural practices; and 3) partnerships and collaborations.

Food defense describes the activities associated with protecting the nation's food supply from international contamination. In response to the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism preparedness and Response Act ("the BT Act") of 2002, the Interagency Working Group for the coordination of Zoonotic Diseases Surveillance (ZDWG) was formed in 2002. The activities of the ZDWG will be described, whose initial goals were/are to: 1) identify needed elements and essential partners (agriculture, public health, wildlife, zoological, others); 2) develop a system of communication and triggers for action; 3) identify roles and responsibilities, and divide workload; and 4) incorporate zoonotic disease surveillance into existing systems.

### **Biographies:**

Dr. Hicks is a Risk Assessment Project Manager, Risk Assessment Coordination Team (RACT), within the Office of Food Defense, Communication & Emergency Response (OFDCER), Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN), U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The RACT provides the Agency and Center with leadership and coordination of critical multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary food safety risk analysis activities, enhancing the center's science-based risk management decisions. He is a member of the Interagency Workgroup-Section 313 BT Act, Surveillance of Zoonotic Diseases; member of the 2005 FDA Science Forum Planning Committee; and a member of the Interagency Working Group on Transborder Movement of Research Materials. Dr. Hicks is a 1979 graduate of the School of Veterinary Medicine, Tuskegee University. He completed specialty training in laboratory animal medicine while serving as a fellow at Stanford University and as a resident at the University of California at Davis. In 2001, he received his Masters of Public Health degree from Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health. Dr. Hicks has completed specializing training in risk analysis, receiving a Certificate in Risk Sciences and Public Policy from Johns Hopkins along with a Food Safety Risk Analysis Core Program Certificate from the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, University of Maryland/U.S. FDA.

John P. Sanders, Jr. DVM, DACVPM Since 1999, Dr. Sanders has been part of the Emergency Coordination and Response Staff at the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition of the Food and Drug Administration. He coordinates the center's preparation, investigation and response to outbreaks, emergencies, and terrorism events, involving food and cosmetic products regulated by FDA. He also coordinates these activities with other federal, state, and local agencies and helps develop strategies for the prevention and detection of future outbreaks and emergencies. He is currently the President of the American Association of Public Health Veterinarians, on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Federal Veterinarians, and Chair of the United States Animal Health Association Public Health and Rabies Committee. He is also a member of the AVMA, American Association of Food Hygiene Veterinarians, National Association of Public Health Veterinarians, and American Public Health Association.

Prior to his affiliation with the FDA, Dr. Sanders was the Southeastern Regional Epidemiology Officer for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) for 9 years. He reviewed and coordinated Veterinary Services disease eradication programs, introduced new tools and skills to the Region such as Geographical Information Systems, Risk Analysis and accompanying software packages, and provided epidemiologic training programs for field veterinarians. Before APHIS, Dr. Sanders worked for the Food Safety and Inspection Service, working in FSIS Epidemiology Branch's Meat borne Hazard Control Center fielding consumer complaints about illnesses related to meat and poultry products. He started his career with FSIS as an inspector in charge at poultry plant in Alabama.

Dr. Sanders earned his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Tennessee and is a diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine.

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