House Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Hearing
Topic: Safeguarding U.S. Agriculture: The Role of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN)
15 July 2025

Highlights:
With no specific mentions of Tribal food and agriculture issues, the hearing emphasized the critical role of the NAHLN – housed under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - with discussion focusing on its overall impact on American agriculture:

- Witnesses testified to the importance of NAHLN in helping American producers with early detection, rapid response and addressing animal diseases and outbreaks before they become unmanageable.
- Discussions focused on safeguarding U.S. agriculture, food security, and national security, with an emphasis (and explanations on) federal-state and higher education partnerships on disease surveillance and response efforts across the country.

Witnesses:

- **Jamie Retallick, DVM, PhD, Diplomate ACVP**, Director/Professor, Kansas Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
  Terry Hensley, MS, DVM, Assistant Lab Director – Diagnostic Services, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory
  Rodger Main, DVM, PhD, Professor & Director of the Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, Veterinary Diagnostic and Production Animal Medicine, Iowa State University
  Annette Jones, DVM, Director and California State Veterinarian, Animal Health and Food Safety Services, California Department of Food and Agriculture

The hearing by the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry focused on the critical role of the NAHLN in protecting U.S. agriculture from animal disease threats. Witnesses from veterinary diagnostic labs testified on the lab network's mission in coordination with the NAHLN. They emphasized the importance of early detection, rapid response, and coordinated surveillance for diseases like new strains of avian flu, African Swine Fever and the New World Screw Worm, especially for operations engaged in livestock and poultry cultivation.

- Subcommittee Chair Tracey Mann (R-KS) gave a specific example in questions to one witness, citing the lab network's role in combating the New World Screw Worm outbreak. He cited USDA estimates that a hypothetical outbreak in Texas would cost producers $732 million annually, with a cost of $4.3 billion should the disease expand into states within the screw worm's range, causing an $10 billion loss.

Both witnesses and Congressional members emphasized the need for sustained federal investment in lab infrastructure, workforce development, and data-sharing systems. Witnesses also agreed that the $10 annual allocation for the lab network through 2031 due to funding directed through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act will support equipment and IT upgrades, training and personnel and capabilities for surge capacity during outbreaks.