



NATIONAL AQUATIC ANIMAL HEALTH PLAN MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

**** COMMENT DEADLINE OCT. 20, 2009 ****

The Issue.

The National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP) has been made available for public review. The plan was developed to help the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to establish programs for diseases that affect the health of aquatic animals. The aforementioned agencies will receive and consider all comments received by Tuesday, October 20, 2009.

The Impact.

The National Aquatic Animal Health Plan was composed by a national task force commissioned by the Joint Subcommittee of Agriculture with the purpose to:

- Facilitate the legal movement of all aquatic animals, their eggs, and their products in interstate and international commerce;
- Protect the health as well as improve the quality and productivity of farmed and wild aquatic animals;
- Ensure the availability of diagnostic, inspection and certification services; and
- Minimize the impacts of disease when they occur in farmed or wild aquatic animals.

NOTE: The plan is not a regulation, but rather a guideline for agencies to follow.

The plan provides plans for the establishment of a National Advisory Committee for Aquatic Animal Health (NACAAH). The committee would include individuals with experience in:

- Commercially producing finfish, mollusks or crustaceans;
- Representing groups/organizations responsible for promoting the recreational use of finfish, mollusk or crustaceans;
- Holding a leadership role in an organization representing commercial aquaculture interests;
- Managing and regulating fishery resources with an emphasis in aquatic health issues;
- Conducting research on aquatic animals;
- Working with international bodies that regulate aquatic animal diseases (i.e., OIC);
- Providing health care services for aquatic animals; and
- Regulating commercial movements of aquatic animals to include import, export and interstate commerce.



The focus of the NACAAH will be to carry out the goals of the plan to prevent the introduction of program aquatic animal pathogens (PAAPs), create federal and state responses to PAAPs, establish health certification standards, identifying diseases and their causing agents [surveying schemes for PAAPs and reportable aquatic animal pathogens (RAAPs)], standardizing laboratories and testing and support education and training in health management of aquatic animals.

Recommended Action.

As noted above, the agencies will receive public comments until October 20th. The plan states that it depends on stakeholder input on this issue. In your comments it is important to address that as decisions are made on certain diseases to make sure shareholders of interest (with species associated with the disease) are included in the decision-making. Members of the fish industry should specifically pay attention to this proposal and be sure to submit comments.

We ask everyone potentially impacted by this proposal to read the entire text of the [plan](#), which can be found attached to the online version of this *PetAlert* on the “Breaking News” page of the PIJAC website at www.pijac.org.

Comments can be submitted electronically to:

<http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2008-0096>

or via postal mail (**2 copies**) to:

Docket No. APHIS 2008-0096
Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD
APHIS
Station 3A-03.8
4700 River Road, Unit 118
Riverdale, MD 20737-1238

If you have any additional questions please feel free to contact PIJAC’s Bambi Nicole Osborne by phone at 202-452-1525 or by email at bambi@pijac.org.

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