



Farm Bill Primer: Selected Animal Health Management and Disease Prevention Provisions

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) forecasts that animal agriculture will account for [\\$274 billion](#) of production by U.S. farms and ranches in 2026, 53% of the total value of U.S. agricultural products. Animal agriculture can be a source of infectious diseases that impact humans. According to the [World Organization for Animal Health](#) “[a]round 60% of known human infectious disease originate in animals, and 76% of emerging disease have an animal origin.” Some Members of Congress have expressed interest in the health of these animals for economic, animal welfare, and public health reasons. Animal and livestock diseases and pests can cause productivity losses, may be difficult and costly to control, and can disrupt domestic food supply and international trade. Examples of diseases of concern include foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), African swine fever (ASF), highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), and New World screwworm (NWS).

Historically, the farm bill has not included a livestock title. In general, animal health provisions are included in the miscellaneous title of the farm bill. In the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 farm bill; [P.L. 115-334](#)), Congress created two animal health programs, increased funding for existing animal disease prevention and management activities (§12101, Animal Disease Prevention and Management), and clarified that USDA may develop veterinary training programs based at colleges of veterinary medicine (§12106, Veterinary Training). As Congress considers authorizing the next farm bill, areas of possible interest in animal health may include federal support for mitigating and managing the risk of animal diseases and pests in domestic livestock.

Background

USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is responsible for protecting and improving animal health in the United States. The Animal Health Protection Act (AHPA; [7 U.S.C. §§8301 et seq.](#)) provides APHIS authority to restrict animal movement, destroy animals, and take preventive controls to eradicate diseases that threaten animal and public health. In addition, under the AHPA the Secretary of Agriculture has the authority to transfer funds from USDA accounts to support emergency animal disease and pest response activities. In FY2026, APHIS administered several programs at a USDA-estimated cost of approximately [\\$527 million](#) to carry out these authorities, including programs for aquatic, avian, cattle, equine, and swine health. Three of the primary programs are the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program (NADPRP), the National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank (NAVVCB), and the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN).

In July 2025, Title I of the FY2025 budget reconciliation law ([P.L. 119-21](#)) amended certain provisions of the 2018 farm bill, including by increasing mandatory funding for NADPRP, NAVVCB, and NAHLN through FY2031.

National Animal Health Laboratory Network

Established in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 farm bill; [P.L. 107-171](#)), [NAHLN](#) is a cooperative effort among APHIS, USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians. The network comprises 66 federal, state, and university animal health laboratories located in 43 states. The laboratories provide animal health diagnostic testing to surveil and detect biological threats to U.S. animal health, public health, and the food supply. Each laboratory is approved for surveillance and testing of various animal diseases. For example, 49 laboratories are approved for FMD preparedness and surge testing, 64 are approved for avian influenza testing, 12 are approved for ASF and classical swine fever (CSF) active surveillance and disease investigation testing, 41 are approved for ASF/CSF disease investigation and response testing, and 32 are approved for chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance testing. In 2025, USDA estimated that network laboratories performed over [930,000 diagnostic tests](#) to support APHIS’s animal health surveillance and response programs. From FY2020 to FY2026, NAHLN supported 104 projects to increase diagnostic testing capacity, improve biosecurity, and increase disease preparedness.

National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program

Established in the 2018 farm bill, NADPRP is a collaborative effort between APHIS and state departments of agriculture, state health officials, land-grant universities, colleges of veterinary medicine, livestock associations, state emergency agencies, and Tribes. NADPRP implements projects that enhance prevention, preparedness, detection, and response to emerging foreign animal diseases and boosts efforts to keep them from entering and spreading in the United States. From FY2020 to FY2026, NADPRP funded 324 projects with 87 cooperators.

National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank

Established in the 2018 farm bill, NAVVCB allows USDA to stockpile animal vaccine and related products to use in the event of an outbreak of a high-impact animal disease. Congress directed NAVVCB to prioritize FMD. In the past, the U.S. livestock industry has expressed concern that the United States would not have enough FMD vaccine in case of an outbreak and

supported the creation of a vaccine bank through the 2018 farm bill. Before NAVVCB, the U.S. industry was reliant on the North American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Vaccine Bank, which is shared among the United States, Mexico, and Canada. In July 2020, USDA announced its initial purchase of \$27.1 million of FMD vaccine for NAVVCB. This and subsequent investments included the purchase of FMD vaccine antigen, stockpiles of FMD and ASF diagnostic test kits, personal protection equipment, and depopulation and decontamination supplies.

Status and Recent Changes to Selected Animal Health Programs

The 2018 farm bill authorized NAHLN, NADPRP, and NAVVCB through the end of FY2023. Congress extended these authorities three times, most recently in November 2025 to cover FY2026 (P.L. 119-37, Division E, §5002). In July 2025, Congress also increased mandatory spending for NAHLN, NADPRP, and NAVVCB through Title I of P.L. 119-21. P.L. 119-21 directs USDA to make available \$233 million each fiscal year from FY2026 to FY2030 for NAHLN, NADPRP, and NAVVCB—\$10 million is reserved for NAHLN, \$70 million for NADPRP, and \$153 million for NAVVCB. Mandatory spending is set to \$75 million in FY2031 and thereafter, of which \$45 million is reserved for NADPRP.

Discussion of Selected Animal Health in H.R. 7567 and the Senate Bill

In the 119th Congress, the House passed a farm bill, the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 (H.R. 7567), and the Senate Agriculture Committee chairman released a discussion draft (referred to here as the Senate bill), Agriculture Act of 2026.

The animal disease prevention and management section of the Senate bill (§12102) substantively contains the provisions of the House bill (§12001) and additional provisions. The Senate bill would increase the authorization of discretionary appropriations for NAHLN from \$30 million to \$45 million and would expand NAVVCB to maintain vaccines and veterinary countermeasures to livestock pests. According to USDA, the change in NAVVCB would allow funding to be used to support domestic production of sterile flies, which is the technique used to control pests and parasites such as New World screwworm and fruit flies. Construction and long-term operation of additional domestic facilities could require substantial federal appropriations, specialized workforce capacity, and ongoing maintenance costs even during periods without active outbreaks.

Both bills would expand the scope of NADRP to include improving animal disease traceability and extending the authorization of appropriations for the three animal health programs to FY2031. USDA states, “animal disease traceability is knowing where diseased and at-risk animals are, where they have been, and when they were there. This information is important to ensuring a rapid response when animal disease events take place.” Many stakeholders in the livestock industry support animal disease traceability measures, though some also have concerns about additional regulatory costs and the confidentiality and security of their business data.

In addition, the House bill and the Senate bill would both authorize USDA to preemptively negotiate regional export ban agreements for known animal disease threats that apply to areas affected by animal disease outbreaks. This is known as *regionalization*, a process where countries mutually agree to recognize the disease-free status of regions or zones within a country to enable the continuation of exports from areas not affected by an outbreak. Countries may have different processes and metrics for recognizing an area as disease-free. This proposed provision may reduce or eliminate nation-level trade restrictions on U.S. animal and animal products imposed by export markets after an animal disease or pest outbreak in the United States. It may also require frequent testing, biosecurity measures, and strict protocols to track and maintain disease-free status of specific regions.

Considerations for Congress

P.L. 119-21 increased mandatory funding for three animal health programs. The reconciliation process was limited to changes to mandatory spending that resulted in budgetary effects and excluded policy changes to discretionary spending programs. When crafting future farm bill legislation, Congress may consider a number of policy issues. These could include the provisions of H.R. 7567 and the Senate bill previously described and other policy issues, such as research funding and governance for innovative approaches to pest and disease control; funding and training for the veterinary workforce; compensation for animals USDA requires to be destroyed; and evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of federal and nonfederal partnerships, for example in the three programs previously described or in other programs such as the National Poultry Improvement Plan or the U.S. Swine Health Improvement Plan.

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