

# NBAF Now: Securing a Nation at Risk

## Background

The National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) offers the only long-term solution to secure America's food supply and agricultural economy through integrated research, development, testing, and evaluation that will provide solutions to natural and deliberate biothreats against agriculture and public health.

The NBAF will be a state-of-the-art, extremely safe and secure, high level biocontainment facility that will enhance our nation's capacity to:

- Assess natural and deliberate infectious disease threats to livestock, wildlife, and humans; and
- Develop and test diagnostics, vaccines, and all forms of medical countermeasures against these threats.

After a three-year, multi-agency assessment, a select panel of scientists and experts from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Agriculture (USDA) *unanimously* chose Manhattan, Kansas, on the merits as the most effective site to operate the NBAF. Potential sites were evaluated based upon published evaluation criteria, environmental impacts, and operational threats and risks.

NBAF funding of \$36 million for FY 2010 is included in the Senate appropriations bill, while the House version does not address NBAF funding. A conference committee will reconcile the two appropriations bills before final passage by both chambers of Congress, which is expected in late September.

## Action Required

- Contact your congressional delegation to urge support for President Obama's \$36 million FY 2010 budget request for the NBAF as included in the Senate appropriations bill.
- Contact the chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives' Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee to urge his support for the President's \$36 million FY 2010 budget request for the NBAF:

U.S. Rep. David Price • *Phone:* 202-225-1784 • *Mail:* 2162 Rayburn, Washington, DC 20515

## Key Messages

- Our nation is unprepared for many of the natural and deliberate threats to the nation's food supply, agricultural economy, and public health posed by dangerous foreign animal diseases.
- The NBAF will be a state-of-the-art facility carrying out basic medical research and applied research and development for new diagnostics, vaccines, and therapies. NBAF training programs will familiarize practicing veterinarians and researchers with all aspects of high consequence livestock diseases and their causative agents (i.e., foreign animal diseases/agents and those transmitted between animals and humans — zoonotic diseases/agents), including safety, field diagnosis, and control.
- President Obama, DHS, and USDA are committed to building the NBAF at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas.
- Modern research methods and facilities are extremely safe — and urgently needed. The NBAF will be built to the highest safety standards, which are keeping tens of millions of U.S. residents safe in places where labs studying the most highly hazardous human infectious diseases already exist.
  - Federal labs in Frederick, Maryland, and Atlanta, Georgia, have worked on the most dangerous human diseases for decades. Not a single community outbreak has occurred in these cities.
  - A laboratory in Winnipeg, Canada, contains the highly contagious foot and mouth disease (FMD) virus just across the border from North Dakota; therefore, FMD research is already conducted on the "mainland." There has never been any loss of containment or spread to livestock or wildlife outside of this facility.
- Plum Island is not a viable option for the NBAF as the existing infrastructure is near the end of its lifecycle. The costs to build and operate the NBAF on Plum Island would exceed a mainland site by two- or three-fold, and it has not been possible for DHS and USDA to maintain an adequate scientific workforce there in recent decades.
- Modern biocontainment technology has eliminated the need for locating research on dangerous foreign animal diseases on an island as was done decades ago. At the same time, the nation needs to significantly upgrade its capacity to prevent the devastating impact of outbreaks of high consequence foreign animal diseases.
- Protecting animals and people from disease — making communities more secure and safe — is the goal, and, with the NBAF, it's a challenge our country is ready and able to conquer.