

News Release
8-9-13

**WEST VIRGINIA POULTRY LABORATORY RECERTIFIED AFTER RIGOROUS
REVIEW**

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory in Moorefield has been recertified as a member of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) for 2013 following an in-depth review process.

Laboratory personnel are approved to run diagnostic tests for avian influenza and Newcastle Disease, both major concerns for the commercial poultry industry that is centered in Moorefield.

“When the regional economy is at stake, it’s absolutely critical that the Department of Agriculture can provide the best of laboratory services in as timely a fashion as possible,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick. “This certification shows that we are as good as anybody in the country when it comes to the services we provide at the Moorefield laboratory.”

NAHLN is a cooperative effort among two USDA agencies — the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) – the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) and state laboratories throughout the country. The laboratories focus on animal diseases and use common testing methods and software platforms to process diagnostic requests and share information.

NAHLN membership is contingent on a wide variety of factors, including laboratory facilities, equipment, procedures, security, record-keeping, quality system and expertise of personnel.

“The proficiency test is very difficult and must be taken annually. Each microbiologist runs predetermined samples, and they can only miss one out of 30 determinations. I’m extremely proud of them, and of our poultry lab in general,” said State Veterinarian Dr. Jewell Plumley, head of WVDA’s Animal Health Division.

“Going through this process is truly making us a better laboratory. When we have meetings with other states and they hear about the program West Virginia has and the cross training of all employees they’re very impressed,” she said.

Meanwhile, other WVDA laboratories outside of Charleston continue to operate in 60-year-old former barracks. Commissioner Helmick said he wants to see those labs moved to a facility that is specifically designed for that type of work.

“These programs need and deserve a better home,” he said. “I am committed to making that happen.”

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs, as mandated by state law. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials in West Virginia. For more information, visit www.wvagriculture.org.