

Single Source Exemption C200721

Term: 1/1/09 – 3/31/10

Cost: \$260,876

The Department received an exemption from the “Contract Reporter” requirements to enter into a single source agreement with Cornell University for Avian Influenza Surveillance Testing.

Program Background

Avian Influenza (AI) is a virus that can cause varying amounts of clinical illness to poultry. AI viruses can infect chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, geese and guinea fowl, as well as a wide variety of other birds. AI can strike poultry quickly without any infection warnings signs. Once established, the disease can spread rapidly from flock to flock, making it essential for the US poultry industry to be alert to this disease threat.

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s (APHIS) Low Pathogenicity AI Prevention and Control Program works to keep AI from becoming established in the US poultry population. APHIS has granted the Department funds to enhance AI control in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states and to aid in the identification, control and eradication of AI in poultry populations. Cornell will provide sampling, monitoring, testing and record keeping activities essential to maintain free international trade and eliminate production loss due to infection.

Selection Rationale

As stipulated in the cooperative agreement, “RRT-PCR testing for avian influenza will be conducted in a federally approved NAHLN laboratory (Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory) in New York. The NYS Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory is certified by APHIS’ NVSL and authorized to perform the necessary testing. Not all laboratories in the United States are approved to conduct such testing because of the stringent standards and the need for USDA certification. There is a time limit on the amount of time the samples can spend in transit before they are no longer eligible for testing. Samples collected from the live bird markets must reach the testing laboratory within 48 hours (maximum) of collection and a 24 hour transit is preferred. Shipping of samples to a New York based laboratory expedites shipping and sample arrival. We have been referring samples to the AHDL since they were approved for such testing in 2004.

Justification of Costs

USDA has awarded the Department a \$600,000 grant for this program, which includes the Cornell contract for \$260,876 for the term 1/01/09 to 3/31/10. There are two measurable outcomes one is the RRT-PCR and the other is virus isolation. The cost at the New York Laboratory for each RRT-PCR test is estimated to be \$22.50 per test. This is a favorable comparison based upon the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) cost of \$84.00/per hour for the same test. Even if the NVSL charges for only a half hour of time for

this test in their laboratory, the comparison cost would be \$42.00 per test. Based on the costs similar to costs at the NVSL for materials, reagents, other supplies and personnel the RRT-PCR in our laboratory is \$22.50 per test. Virus isolation based on the costs for materials, reagents, other supplies and personnel virus isolation in the New York Laboratory is estimated to be \$32.50 per test. The NVSL currently charges \$48.00 for this same test. The budget requested for this project was developed based upon the Cornell's experience and knowledge of the actual costs of surveillance testing. USDA ultimately determined the award amount of this grant.