

## Hearing on NBAF Focuses on Updated Risk Assessment

Last Friday, a committee of the National Research Council (NRC) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) held a meeting in Washington D.C. to discuss the updated risk assessment for the proposed National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) that is scheduled to be built in Manhattan, Kansas.

The meeting focused on a report made public last month about NBAF regarding the accidental release of animal diseases from the lab. Last month's report by the DHS stated that over the 50 year life span of the facility, the likelihood of an accidental release of a foot and mouth outbreak is less than .11 percent. That percentage takes into consideration possible catastrophic events such as tornados and earthquakes. Not taking into account catastrophic events, the risk assessment is less than .008 percent.

During the meeting, experts reviewed the updated risk assessment and addressed concerns previously raised in an NRC review of the initial site-specific risk assessment for the NBAF. DHS provided the committee with a presentation on the contractor's approach for developing the work plan for the updated assessment. Following the completion of the final assessment, the committee will review the document and prepare a report for DHS and Congress containing its findings on its adequacy and validity. The report is expected to be provided within four months of receiving the final updated assessment from DHS.

NBAF is expected to cost \$650 million and will replace the animal research facility at Plum Island, New York. Last month, the Obama administration cut next year's federal funding for NBAF. However, evaluations, assessments, and hearings will continue as mandated by Congress. At this point in time, the facility is still expected to receive accreditation in 2017 with operations fully transferred from Plum Island by 2018.

Kansas Cattlemen's Association has policy to promote extensive bio-security measures to prevent the release of animal disease agents into the environment, to stay apprised regarding NBAF, and work with Homeland Security to protect producers from the potential release of hazardous materials and/or contaminations. KCA continues to monitor the NBAF situation and keep producers up to date on local and national events.