

University Animal Health Leader Selected To Lead NBAF Engagement

A Kansas State University animal health leader has been chosen to engage local, regional and national stakeholders in the development of strategic partnerships for the National Bio and Agro-defense Facility, or NBAF.

The Department of Homeland Security has selected Marty Vanier, the university's director of operations at the National Agricultural Biosecurity Center, to be the senior program manager for strategic partnership development. Vanier will start her new responsibilities with the DHS Science and Technology Directorate in April.

"Dr. Vanier's background will help to catalyze innovation and future planning in support of NBAF by establishing and furthering partnerships with industry, end users and key stakeholders," said DHS NBAF director James Johnson.

Construction on the \$1.25 billion animal disease research laboratory will begin in May and is expected to be completed in 2020. The lab is on the northeast edge of Kansas State University's Manhattan campus.

"We congratulate Marty Vanier on this recognition, as she is the ideal leader to engage a variety of stakeholders in the process of transitioning NBAF to Kansas," said Kirk Schulz, president of Kansas State University. "With leaders like Dr. Vanier, Kansas State University is poised to continue important research collaborations and to become a Top 50 public research university by 2025."

As part of her new responsibilities with DHS, Vanier will engage internal and external stakeholders, including government entities, the livestock community, animal health industry and educational institutions.

"NBAF brings an opportunity for expanded education and training of scientists and veterinarians who are engaged in protecting livestock and the security of our food supply and also are engaged with partners in human health and assisting them in controlling zoonotic diseases," Vanier said.

Through her work as director of the National Agricultural Biosecurity Center, Vanier led the center's mission to develop programs and capabilities that address threats to the national and world agricultural economy.

Vanier said she was looking forward to engaging all NBAF stakeholders in creating a more secure food supply.

"I want to help design new ways for folks in agricultural production to engage in this laboratory effort," Vanier said. "This is an opportunity to bring the end users of the products of the research that will come out of NBAF and allow them to assist in identifying the needs and issues that are important to them. They can be a part of the assessment of the threats and risks to agricultural enterprise in the U.S. and have a real stake in the outcomes of the research in the laboratory."

Vanier received her bachelor's degree in animal science from Kansas State University in 1979 and her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in 1981. She began her career in veterinary pharmaceutical and food safety policy. In 1987, she became deputy director for information and legislative affairs in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's food safety and inspection service.

Vanier first joined Kansas State University in 1989 as a research assistant for the food safety consortium in the animal sciences and industry department. From 1992 to 1999, she also served as executive director for the Kansas Agricultural Alliance, a coalition of statewide agricultural commodity and agribusiness organizations. She became director of the National Agricultural Biosecurity Center in 2003.

NBAF will be the nation's foremost animal disease research facility. The biosafety level-3 and 4 laboratory will research emerging, high-consequence livestock diseases that threaten animal and human health.